DIERK LANGE

ANCIENT KINGDOMS OF WEST AFRICA

AFRICA-CENTRED AND CANAANITE-ISRAELITE PERSPECTIVES

A collection of published and unpublished studies in English and French

CONTENTS

CONTENTS

NEW ILLUSTRATIONS

MAPS:

CHARTS:

PHOTOGRAPHS:

ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE REPRINTS

MAPS

PHOTOGRAPHS:

Kawar

Fezzan

TABLES:

PREFACE

The essays collected in this volume reflect an intellectual adventure. Trained at the Sorbonne by scholars such as Raymond Mauny and Claude Cahen, I initially based my approach to African history solely on written texts – first the scarce reality by accessible reports of European consuls and travellers, later the more difficult writings of Arab geographers and African chroniclers. Consequently my first publications deal with states, trade and Islam. They assumed that the rhythm of change did not differ significantly in Africa from that in Europe or in the Near East. Field research in Libya, Niger and Nigeria spurred my interest in oral narratives as well as in social and political institutions. Direct contact with traditional officials, court historians and law court proceedings inevitably led to a greater awareness of phenomena of the *longue durée*.

Having tried, like others, to reconstruct African history on the basis of the late medieval paradigm implying spectacular social and political transformations as a relatively late period, I finally recognized the unsatisfactory nature of the results.[1] As an alternative, I turned my attention to the study of cultural contents of a more distant past which were more faithfully preserved in sub-Saharan Africa than in the societies further north. In written accounts, African features like divine kingship, polythetic religion and clan structures are hardly mentioned and hardly ever described. To reconstruct these long lasting cultural traits, we must turn our attention to ethnographic records. But since most anthropologists themselves have given up their original interest in traditions and ancient survivals, the African historian is obliged to direct field investigations not only towards the collection of oral sources, but also to the observation and description of very stable and – before the onslaught of colonialism and globalization – only slowly changing social and political institutions, cultural patterns and cult-dramatic performances.

On the basis of such new evidence, striking parallels between extant African cultures and written testimonies concerning ancient Near Eastern societies can be detected. From there, it is only a little step to the idea that in the period preceding the textual evidence of the Middle Ages, African societies were not isolated or self-contained, but that instead they took part on various levels in global exchange. Particularly during the Canaanite-Phoenician period, many culture traits of ancient Mediterranean and Near Eastern societies adopted in African contexts almost unchanged, but others were modified due to local factors, thus giving rise to new cultures with specific forms of their own. Hence it would ap-

[1] See below VIII and X, as well as the corrections in Addenda pp. 545-567. See also 1986c, 1990, 1991b and 1992a.

PREFACE

The essays collected in this volume reflect an intellectual adventure. Trained at the Sorbonne by scholars such as Raymond Mauny and Claude Cahen, I initially based my approach to African history solely on written texts – first the more readily accessible reports of European consuls and travellers, later the more difficult writings of Arab geographers and African chroniclers. Consequently, my first publications deal with states, trade and Islam. They assumed that the rhythm of change did not differ significantly in Africa from that in Europe or in the Near East. Field research in Libya, Niger and Nigeria spurred my interest in oral narratives as well as in social and political institutions. Direct contact with traditional officials, court historians and live court proceedings inevitably led to a greater awareness of phenomena of the *longue durée*.

Having tried, like others, to reconstruct African History on the basis of the late medieval paradigm implying spectacular social and political transformations at a relatively late period, I finally recognised the unsatisfactory nature of the results.[1] As an alternative, I turned my attention to the study of cultural remnants of a more distant past which were more faithfully preserved in sub-Saharan Africa than in the societies further north. In written accounts, African features like divine kingship, polytheistic religion and clan structures are barely mentioned and hardly ever described. To reconstruct these long lasting cultural traits, we must turn our attention to ethnographic records. But since most anthropologists themselves have given up their original interests in traditions and ancient survivals, the African historian is obliged to direct field investigations not only towards the collection of oral sources, but also to the observation and description of very stable and – before the onslaught of colonialism and globalization – only slowly changing social and political institutions, cultural patterns and cult-dramatic performances.

On the basis of such new evidence, striking parallels between extant African cultures and written testimonies concerning ancient Near Eastern societies can be detected. From there, it is only a little step to the idea that in the period preceding the textual evidence of the Middle Ages, African societies were not isolated or self-contained, but that instead they took part on various levels in global exchange. Particularly during the Canaanite-Phoenician period, many culture traits of ancient Mediterranean and Near Eastern societies were adopted in African contexts almost unchanged, but others were modified due to local factors, thus giving rise to new cultures with specific forms of their own. Hence it would ap-

[1] See below VIII and X, as well as the corrections in Addenda pp. 545-567. See also 1988c, 1990, 1991b and 1992a.

pear that a number of African peoples living close to the Saharan desert or in proximity to Arabia participated actively in the classical age insofar as they were in intense economic and cultural contact with the Semitic societies of the ancient Near East. With respect to the centres of the ancient world they were peripheral, but with respect to other regions of the African continent they had the role of cultural pioneers.

The first section of the volume comprises three studies with a focus on trans-Saharan relations (I-III). Article I is based on a research trip along the little-known central Saharan trade route between Tripoli and Kawar. Building on this personal experience, I came to the conclusion that the Sahara was not everywhere a barrier beween Sahelian societies and North Africa but that in some regions it provided conditions for easy communication. Furthermore, at various points between Lake Chad and Tripoli, archaeological remains were found that bear witness to a settlement policy of the medieval rulers of Kanem-Bornu designed to ensure the control of communications with the outside world. The second article (II) examines the medieval export of alum from Kawar. In the twelfth century this African commodity was transported by caravans to various ports of the Mediterranean sea and briefly played an important role in the economy of the western world. Article III draws attention to the medieval sites of northeastern Niger, to the alum production of Kawar, and to the earlier, unrecorded exploitation of salt in that oasis.

The six studies in section two concern the history of Kanem-Bornu (IV-IX). Article IV is a speculative attempt to explain the demise of the Duguwa and the rise of the Sefuwa in the eleventh century in terms of the shift from an internal to an external recruitment of slaves. In the new essay XII an alternative and perhaps more satisfactory interpretation of the same event is offered in reference to the internal clan structure – the clans of the Sefuwa section being more compatible with Islam than the clans of the Duguwa section. Article V is a by-product of field research conducted in Bornu that focused on the identification and elucidation of the place-names mentioned in the chronicle of Ibn Furṭū. It presents oral narratives pertaining to the death of a fourteenth century Bornu king and compares these surprisingly old and authentic oral traditions to the parallel written information provided by the Chronicle of the sultans of Kanem-Bornu, the *Girgam*. Article VI reconsiders the shift of the Sefuwa from Kanem to Bornu and shows that this event did not correspond to the desperate flight of the ruling dynasty to a foreign land – as intimated by the *Girgam* and assumed by a number of historians – but rather to the loss of one central province due to the onslaught of a dynastic opposition and the compensatory consolidation of the second central province of the bi-focal Chadic empire. Turning to institutional history, article VII analyses the offices and functions of three leading titleholders of the state and shows that these positions,

in spite of the Arabic form of their titles, were all of local derivation. Article VIII examines the relations between the originally foreign Kanuri and the different local groups of Sao and comes to the conclusion that in a long lasting process of Kanurization, the autochthones were first dominated and then either assimilated or eliminated. Approaching the ethnic history of Kanem-Bornu from the point of view of ruling and dethroned dynasties, article IX criticises the widespread assumption that specific people of the Sahelian region founded and developed their own states, and suggests that the present-day ethnic situations are most often the outcomes rather than the starting points of dynastic histories. Thus, the Kanuri of today should be considered as the result of a long process of ethnic homogenization and not as an immutable ethnic entity existing from the time prior to the foundation of the Chadic state.

The history of the Hausa states is the topic of section three (X-XII). On the basis of nineteenth century texts, article X takes the view that the Bayajidda legend is a flexible oral narrative amenable to easy manipulation. As such it shares the widespread assumption of fast and far-reaching changes in pre-colonial African societies. The next article (XI) favours the opposite position by looking at the basic pattern of the Hausa tradition as a phenomenon of the *longue durée* which can be traced back to an Israelite model based on Canaanite antecedents. Mainly using etymological arguments and not proposing any concrete way of cultural transmission, the study is no more than a preliminary attempt to overcome the medieval paradigm in West African history. The new essay XII builds on the results of the preceding article but uses a more structural method of analysis. It compares the cult-mythological system underpinning the Hausa states with that of various other states of the Central Sudan and of the ancient Near East and proposes precise ways and periods for the spread of the Canaanite-Israelite cultural pattern to West and East Africa. Africanists who are reluctant to take non-African phenomena into consideration will find at the end of this chapter a literal translation of the first oral and palace version of the Bayajidda legend as it was told to me in Daura.

The studies of section four concern the Yoruba states and more particularly Ife, their traditional centre (XIII-XV). Article XIII reviews previous theories of Yoruba origins and points out problems with the available archaeological datings for Ife. Alternative solutions to the question of Yoruba origins are put forward in article XIV, a paper presented at the annual conference of the Africanist research group of Bayreuth in 1993. It compares the Yoruba myth of Sango with the Baal-Cycle of Ugarit and the Yoruba myth of Yemoja with the Babylonian Creation Epic and thus implies the existence of cultural influences from the Semitic world in West Africa. Turning to Kebbi traditions, it equates the Kanta legend with the

legend of Sargon of Akkad and hence suggests even more precise and historically retraceable connections to the outside world. Owing to the purely comparative approach, the weight given to etymological arguments, and the neglect of concrete ways of diffusion the paper was received with scepticism. The new essay XV tries to correct the main shortcomings of my previous analysis by concentrating on the African connections between oral narrative, cult-dramatic performance, and related clan organization, thus exploring more in-depth the social conditions of preserving ancient cultural memories (see also 2004a). Furthermore, it uses the concepts and terminologies employed for the analysis of myths and rituals of the ancient Near East and examines precise parallels between the festival of a dying and rising god in Ife with the fate of a similar deity in the Baal Cycle of Ugarit, the best known example of a cult myth within the sphere of the Canaanite culture. Considered to be part of a global social phenomenon inconceivable without the state, the Itapa festival and the related social and political institutions are thought to be related to the early state building process set in motion by the Phoenicians in the region of Lake Chad (see also XII). In spite of their hypothetical nature, articles XI and XIV are included in this collection in order to allow the reader to measure the progress of research accomplished during the last ten years with respect to the attempt of putting ancient Africa into a global context. It is perhaps inevitable that the elaboration of alternatives to the exclusively Africa-centred approach of Africanist research begins in the mode of trial and error. Moreover, the well-disposed reader can find in them a number of important directions for further research.[2]

The five studies of the section five are of a more conventional nature (XVI-XX). Dealing with the history of the kingdoms of the Middle Niger, they are all directly or indirectly based on the evidence provided by the royal stelae of Gao-Saney. The first (XVI) offers a general presentation of these stelae and their inscriptions – the historically most significant dating to the beginning of the twelfth century – and proposes to identify the commemorated rulers as members of a new Berber dynasty. The next article (XVII) maintains this identification but adds a new ethnic dimension to the analysis by suggesting the existence of a Mande ethnic substratum on the eastern Middle Niger. Two further contributions reject the Berber hypothesis and argue in favour of a Mande identity of the kings of Gao-Saney. Article XVIII relates the rise of the kings of Gao-Saney to a dynastic upheaval in Ghana in the course of which the Sisse refugee king of Ghana and his entourage established themselves in Gao. Article XIX explores the history of Ghana more in its own terms. It tries to show that the ancient central

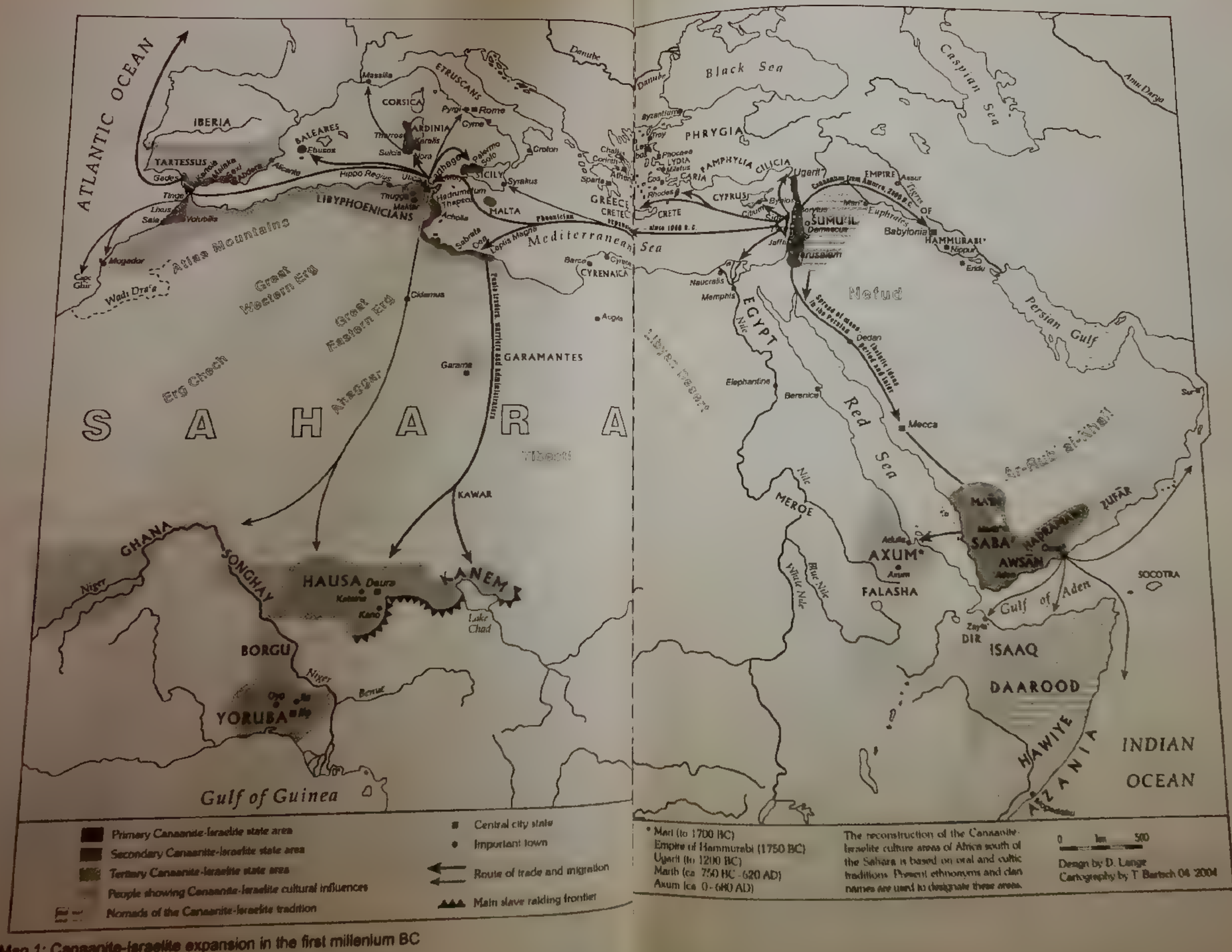
[2] For more advanced studies exploring the ancient history paradigm see 2003, 2004a, 2004b, and 2004c.

province of the kingdom was situated in the Lakes region of the Niger. Further, it distinguishes between two successive dynastic disruptions in Ghana in the second half of the eleventh century, the first leading to the advent of a Muslim king of the Sisse supported by the Almoravids and the second to the rise of a more radical Islamic party which ousted the Sisse from power. In the name of Islam, the Almoravids exerted considerable pressure on the sub-Saharan state, supporting one party to the detriment of another, and thus contributed to producing dynastic changes. The transmission of power on the Middle Niger from Ghana to Mali and further to Songhay is the subject of the new essay XX. Building on the earlier results of the ethnic interpretation of the Gao-Saney inscriptions, it suggests that the state tradition of Ghana was not only perpetuated by the Keita of Mali on the upper Niger but also by the Zā and the subsequent Zarma on the eastern Niger bend before the Malian expansion resulted in the creation of a vast Muslim empire on the institutional basis of ancient Ghana. In the second half of the fourteenth century, the rise of the Songhay in connection with the anti-Malian struggle of the Mande-derived dynasty of the Sonni reduced considerably the overall Mande influence on the eastern Middle Niger. Although the last dynasty of the eastern Middle Niger, the Askiya, were again of Mande origin, their state became entirely Songhay in the sixteenth century.

Finally I would like to draw attention to the last section of the book, Addenda et Corrigenda. Here I attempt to offer a critical re-evaluation and updating of the different articles republished in the present volume.

I am grateful to the following publishers for permission to reprint the articles in this volume: Cambridge University Press, Dietrich Reimer, Karl Alber, LIT and Walter de Gruyter, and to the editors of *Annals of the Institute of Cultural Studies* (B. Adediran), *History in Africa* (D. Henige), *Journal of African History* (G. M. Austin), *Paideuma* (K.-H. Kohl, Frobenius-Institut) and *Saeculum* (J. Martin). Two articles were reset (II, III).

My special thanks go to my friend Paul Igbeneghu from Iraokhor-Fugar near Auchi for the many years of excellent companionship, assistance and advice in practical and often quite decisive matters of field-research, to the cartographer Thomas Bartsch, Heidesheim/Rhein, for his tireless, good-humoured and skillful preparation of the maps and graphics, to Kirk Arden Hoppe and Biodun Adediran for their cogent and unfailing English corrections and discussions of historical matters and to Katrin Mitzinger for her efficient proof-reading and her tireless contribution to the preparation of the index. Further valuable corrections were suggested by Elizabeth Palcic. My thanks go also to the editor and his assistant Martina Fath for their effective and cordial collaboration.



Map 1: Canaanite-Israelite expansion in the first millenium BC

Financial support for field research was provided by the German Research Foundation (DFG). The original studies published in this volume benefited from a research grant from this organization for a project extending from 1998 to 2003 allowing the collaboration with Gabriele Weisser (La 359/6-1). Further resources were provided by a project extending from 2000 to 2004 within the Sonderforschungsbereich 560 (C 3) in which Ulrich Rinn studied similar phenomena on the East African coast. I am particularly grateful to the chairman of the SFB, Gerd Spittler, and to all its members and staff for the many fruitful discussions, suggestions and practical services.

I feel greatly indebted to scholars specialising in Ancient History and in the ancient Near East. First and foremost to Otto Kaiser, but also to Jehan Desanges, Klaus Koch, Oswald Loretz, Hans Georg Niemeyer, Erwin Ruprechtsberger, Dietrich Rusam, Jörg Schlumberger, Leonard Schumacher and Paolo Xella. Practical advice and encouragement were further provided by a number of colleagues in African Studies and related fields including Biodun Adediran and Bernhard Streck as well as Mahdi Adamu, Thomas Bargatzky, Bawuro Barkindo, Helmut Bley, Jean Boulègue, Finn Fuglestad, Djibo Hamani, Jürgen and Angelika Jakobi, Georg Klute, M. Mohamed Abdi, Paulo Moraes Farias, Michka Sachnine, Philip Shea and Christoph Winter.

Those who had to endure most of the stress involved in the iconoclastic research presented here are my wife Shamsa Dirie and our daughter Mona. Words cannot express the gratitude I feel towards them.

Dierk Lange
History Department
University of Bayreuth
May 2004

BIBLIOGRAPHY OF THE AUTHOR

Field Notes according to years: FN 76 (Fezzan, Kawar); 77 a,b (Bornu); 89 a,b; 90 (Kebbi); 93 (Kebbi/Achifawa); 94 (Kebbi); 95 (Daura/Kebbi); 96; 97 (Daura/Hausa); 00; 01; 02 (Ife/Yoruba).

1972a "Un vocabulaire kanuri de la fin du XVII[e] siècle", *Cahiers d'Études Africaines* 12, 277-90.

1972b (with S. Berthoud) "L'intérieur de l'Afrique Occidentale d'après Giovanni Lorenzo Anania (XVI[e] siècle)", *Cahiers d'Histoire Mondiale* 14, 299-250.

1974 *Contribution à l'histoire dynastique du Kānem-Bornū (des origines jusqu'au début du XIX[e] siècle)*, Thèse de 3[ème] Cycle dirigée par R. Mauny, Paris-Sorbonne (publ. 1977a).

1977a *Chronologie et histoire: le dīwān des sultans du Kānem-Bornū*, Wiesbaden, F. Steiner.

1977b [I] (with S. Berthoud) "Al-Qaṣaba et d'autres villes de la route centrale du Sahara", *Paideuma* 23, 181-200.

1978a [IV] "Progrès de l'Islam et changements politiques au Kānem du XI[e] au XIII[e] siècle: un essai d'interprétation", *Journal of African History* 19, 495-513.

1978b "Quelques remarques sur le *Kitāb ghazawāt Barnū*", *Bulletin d'Information, Fontes Historiae Africanae* 4, 45-7.

1979a [V] "Les lieux de sépulture des rois sēfuwa (Kānem-Bornū)", *Paideuma* 25, 145-157.

1979b "Un texte de Maqrīzī sur les 'races des Sūdān'", *Revue d'Islamologie* 15, 187-209.

1979c (with R. O'Fahey und J. Hunwick) "Two glosses concerning the *Bilād al-Sūdān* on a manuscript of al-Nuwayrī's *Nihāyat al-'Arab*", *Bulletin d'Information, Fontes Historiae Africanae* 5, 16-24.

1980 "La région du lac Tchad d'après la Géographie d'Ibn Sa'īd: texte et cartes", *Revue d'Islamologie* 16, 149-181.

1981 "Un document de la fin du XVII[e] siècle sur le commerce transsaharien", *in:* J. Devisse (ed.), *Le sol, la parole et l'écrit. Mélanges en hommage à Raymond Mauny*, Paris, vol. II, 673-84.

1982 [VI] "L'éviction des Sēfuwa du Kānem et l'origine des Bulāla", *Journal of African History* 23, 315-331.

1983 [II] "L'alun du Kawar: une exportation africaine vers l'Europe", *Cahiers du Centre de Recherches Africaines*, 2, 21-4.

1984a "The kingdoms and peoples of Chad", *in:* D. T. Niane (ed.), *General History of Africa* (UNESCO), vol. IV, Paris, 238-265.
1984b [III] "Notes sur le Kawar au Moyen-Âge", *Mu Kara Sani* (Niamey) 3, 12-18.
1984c "Niger", *in:* R. Hofmeier und M. Schönborn (eds.), *Politisches Lexikon Afrikas*, Munich, 240-248.
1986a "Society in the Lake Chad area at the end of the Byzantine period, prior to the introduction of Islam", *Libya Antiqua* (The General History of Africa, UNESCO: Studies and Documents, 11) Paris, 235-42.
1986b "Notes sur Njīmi, capitale du Kānem", *Bulletin d'Information, Fontes Historiae Africanae* 11/12, 1986-1987, 36-40.
1986c "A Sudanic Chronicle: The Borno expeditions of Idrīs Alauma according to the account of Aḥmad b. Furṭū", *Bulletin d'Information, Fontes Historiae Africanae* 11/12, 1986-1987, 42-47.
1987a *A Sudanic Chronicle: The Borno Expeditions of Idrīs Alauma (1564-1576)*, Stuttgart, F. Steiner.
1987b *Contribution à l'histoire médiévale du Borno et des États Hausa*, Thèse de Doctorat d'État, Paris-Sorbonne, directed by J. Devisse and E. Haberland (not publ.).
1987c "The Chad region as a crossroads", *in:* M. al-Fāsī (ed.), *General History of Africa* (UNESCO), vol. III, 436-460.
1987d [X] "The evolution of the Hausa story: from Bawo to Bayajidda", *Afrika und Übersee* 70, 195-209.
1988a [VII] "Trois hauts dignitaires bornoans du XVI^e siècle: le Digma, le grand Jarma et le Cikama", *Journal of African History* 29, 177-189.
1988b "Neue Erkenntnisse zur Geschichte von Songhay", *Afrika und Übersee* 71, 5-15.
1988c "Der Ursprung des Namens 'Hausa' und die Entstehung der Hausa-Legende", *in:* H. Hagedorn und R. Baumhauer (eds.), *Geowissenschaftliche Untersuchungen in Afrika*, Würzburg, 305-315.
1989 [VIII] "Préliminaires à une histoire des Sao", *Journal of African History* 30, 189-210.
1990 "Die Königinmutter im Tschadseegebiet: historische Betrachtungen", *Paideuma* 36, 139-156.
1991a [XVI] "Les rois de Gao-Sané et les Almoravides", *Journal of African History* 32, 251-275.
1991b "Das frühe Kebbi und Mali: Versuch einer historischen Interpretation der Kanta-Traditionen", *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 141, 139-166.
1991c (with R. Baumhauer) "Der Alaun des Kawar (Niger): Vorkommen und Abbau", *Paideuma* 37, 223-231.

1992a "Ein vernachläßigtes Forschungsgebiet: die Geschichte des westafrikanischen Mittelalters", *Saeculum* 43, 291-306.
1992b "Das alte Mali und Ghana: Die Kritik einer historiographischen Fiktion", *Historische Zeitschrift* 255, 587-623.
1992c "Ethnogenesis and the state in the Lake Chad region", *in:* E. B. Ruano und M. E. Burgos (eds.), *17^e Congrès International des Sciences Historiques*, Madrid, 651-660.
1993a [IX] "Ethnogenesis from within the Chadic state. Some thoughts on the history of Kanem-Borno", *Paideuma* 39, 261-277.
1993b "Die Hausa-Tradition in ihrer Abhängigkeit von Kanem-Borno und Nubien", *Anthropos* 88, 47-76.
1994a [XVII] "From Mande to Songhay: Towards a political and ethnic history of medieval Gao", *Journal of African History* 35, 275-301.
1994b "Der Ursprung des westafrikanischen Wettergottes Schango", *Saeculum* 45, 213-238.
1994c "The Almoravids and the Islamization of the Great States of West Africa", *in*: R. Gyselen (ed.), *Res Orientales*, VI (Mélanges Claude Cahen), 65-76.
1995a [XI] "The pre-Islamic dimension of Hausa history", *Saeculum* 46, 161-203.
1995b [XIV] "Links between West Africa and the Ancient Orient", *in:* H. Willer *et al.* (eds.), *Macht der Identität – Identität der Macht*, Münster, 347-369.
1995c "Ife und der Ursprung der Yoruba: Historiographische Betrachtungen", *Periplus* 5, 141-152.
1995d [XIII] "Ife and the origin of the Yoruba: Historiographical considerations", *Ife: Annals of the Institute of Cultural Studies* (Ife) 6, 39-49.
1995e "Die Geschichte des westlichen Hausalandes und die Identifikation der Kanta-Sage als akkadische Ursprungstradition", *in:* G. Spittler und E. Breitinger (eds.), *Afrikaforschung an der Universität Bayreuth*, Bayreuth, 80-84.
1996a [XVIII]"La chute de la dynastie des Sissé: Considérations sur la dislocation de l'empire du Ghana à partir de l'histoire de Gao", *History in Africa* 23, 155-178.
1996b [XIX] "The Almoravid expansion and the downfall of Ghana", *Der Islam* 73, 122-159.
1997a "Das hebräische Erbe der Yoruba: I. Ursprungssagen, Schöpfungsmythen und Festrituale", *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 147, 79-138.
1997b "Bornu region, history", J. Middelton (ed.), *Encyclopaedia of Subsaharan Africa*, vol. I, New York, 189-190.
1998a "Zwischen Regenwald und Wüste – die Großreiche der westlichen Sudanzone (9. - 16. Jh.)", *in:* M. Münter-Elfner (ed.), *Die Weltgeschichte – Brockhaus*, vol. III, Mannheim, 620-631.

1998b "Das sakrale Königtum der Hausa", *in:* T. Förster (ed.), *Afrikaforschung in Bayreuth*, Bayreuth, 77-82.
1999a "Das hebräische Erbe der Yoruba, II: Israelitische Geschichte und kanaanäischer Kult", *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 149, 79-144.
1999b "Das kanaanäisch-israelitische Neujahrsfest der Hausa", *in:* M. Kropp und A. Wagner (eds.), *Schnittpunkt Ugarit*, Frankfurt/M, 109-162.
1999c "Äthiopien im Kontext der semitischen Welt: Die Königin von Saba als kanaanäische Liebesgöttin", *in:* H. P. Hahn und G. Spittler (eds.), *Afrika und die Globalisierung*, Münster, 269-277.
1999d Rev. art., "M.G. Smith, *Government in Kano*, 1997", *Mega-Tchad* 99, 45-48.
2000a "Jesus und das Auferstehungsfest der Yoruba", *in:* U. Engel *et al.* (eds.), *Afrika 2000, Leipzig 30. März bis 1. April*, CD-Rom, Münster, 12 p.
2000b Rev. art., "Pemberton/Afolayan, *Yoruba Sacred Kingship*, 1996", *Odu* 40, 225-229.
2003 "Der Ursprung des Bösen: Neue Evidenzen aus Afrika, Kanaan und Israel", *in:* W. H. Ritter und J. Schlumberger (eds.), *Das Böse in der Geschichte*, Dettelbach, 1-27.
2004a "Preservation of Canaanite Creation Culture in Ifẹ", *in:* P. Probst und G. Spittler (eds.), *Between Resistance and Expansion: Dimensions of Local Vitality in Africa* (*Beiträge zur Afrikaforschung*, n° 18), Münster, 127-158.
2004b "Die Gründung der Hausastaaten – ein Plädoyer für eine historische Ethnologie", *in:* K. Beck et al. (eds.), *Festschrift Gerd Spittler*, Cologne, 28-39.
2004c "Not yet Songhay", *Orientalische Literaturzeitung 2*, 145-154.
2004d "The Phoenician slave trade and the rise of states in the Central Sudan", *in:* François-Xavier Fauvelle-Aymar et Bertrand Hirsch (eds.), *Mélanges Jean Boulègue* (in press).

Paideuma 23, 1977

AL-QAṢABA ET D'AUTRES VILLES DE LA ROUTE CENTRALE DU SAHARA*

DIERK LANGE** et SILVIO BERTHOUD

La route centrale du Sahara, entre le Fezzān et la région du lac Tchad, est sans doute l'une des plus anciennes voies commerciales connues. Deux groupes d'oasis, situés au nord et au sud d'un massif montagneux en ont fait un lieu de passage privilégié entre la côte méditerranéenne et les pays du Soudan. Des conditions aussi favorables ne se retrouvent que dans la vallée du Nil, à l'est, et, dans une moindre mesure, en Afrique de l'ouest entre la boucle du Niger et le Maghreb.

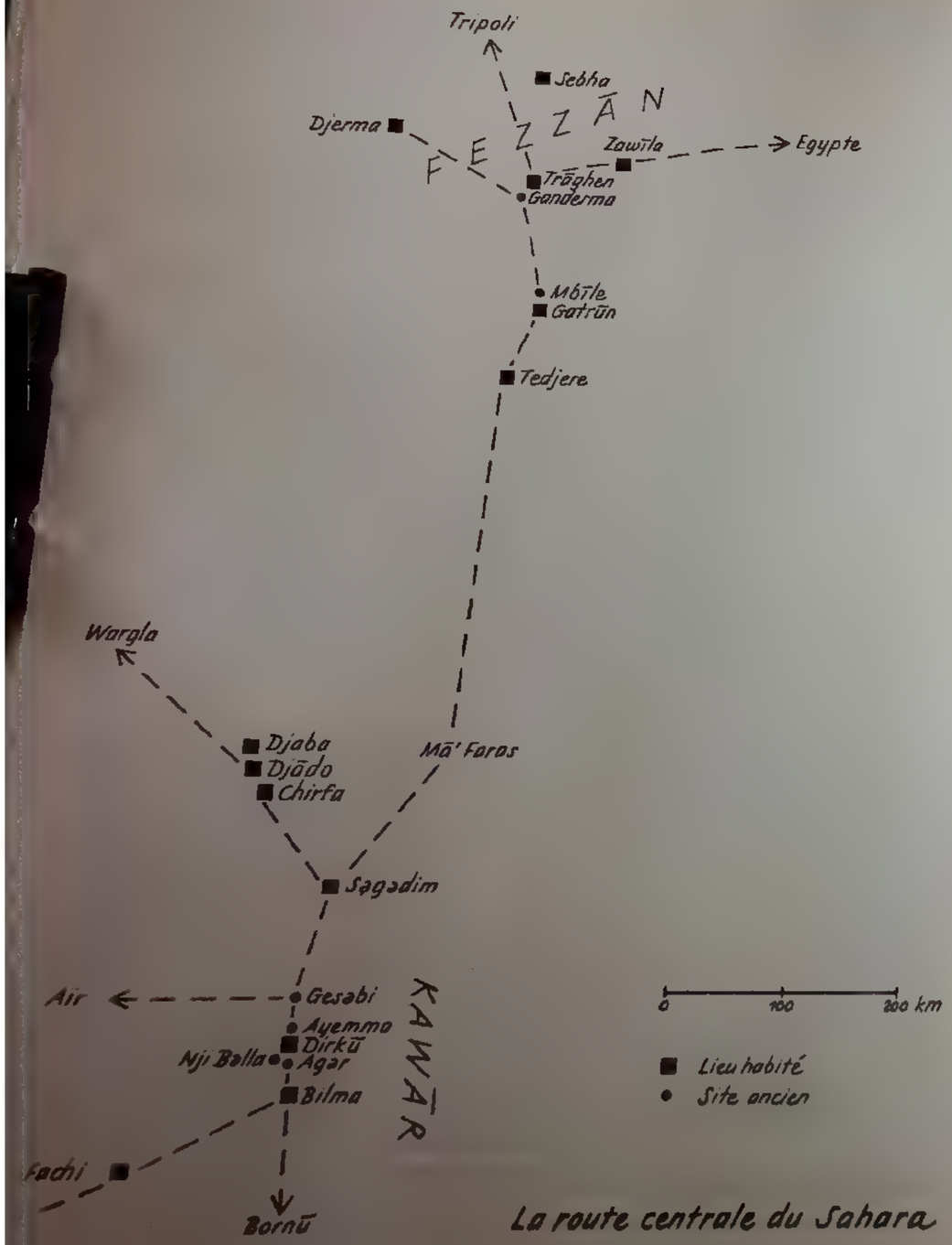
Les conditions naturelles propres à la voie centrale du Sahara ont fait que son tracé est resté quasiment invariable depuis l'apparition du chameau jusqu'à l'époque coloniale. Au sud, cette continuité était renforcée par la présence, éventuellement depuis la fin du VI[e] siècle, d'un royaume faisant preuve, lui aussi, d'une étonnante stabilité à travers le temps. Au nord, du littoral maghrebin jusqu'en Egypte, se faisait sentir un appel économique constant. La nature de la route et la stabilité des rapports économiques des partenaires en présence a pu donner l'impression d'une permanence sans histoire.

Les oasis très étendues pouvaient favoriser l'installation de communautés de commerçants. Situé au centre de la voie commerciale, le Kawār exerçait une attraction considérable sur des commerçants de différentes origines. Leur activité déterminait d'une façon sensible les formes prises par les échanges économiques. De plus, les puissances en possession des débouchés de la route devaient intervenir directement pour contrôler cette artère unique lorsqu'ils en avaient les moyens.

Ces différentes influences à travers le temps ont laissé de nombreuses traces archéologiques jalonnant la voie centrale du Sahara entre le Fezzān et le Kawār. Par rapport à l'étude de ces sites, les renseignements obtenus par les textes ne peuvent être plus qu'un substitut. Ce n'est qu'à partir d'une étude globale des différentes villes et fortifications, s'appuyant principalement sur l'archéologie, qu'une histoire nuancée de la route centrale du Sahara pourra être écrite. Un inventaire succint des sites permettra, on l'espère, de fournir des éléments utiles pour des fouilles ultérieures. Face à la richesse de la documentation archéologique encore totalement inexploitée, la deuxième partie de la présente étude ne pourra qu'ébaucher les lignes générales d'une histoire encore largement dans l'ombre.

* Rédigé en février 1977 à Zinder l'article est le résultat de recherches communes au Fezzān et dans les oasis du Kawār.

** D. Lange a bénéficié d'une subvention de la Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft.



La route centrale du Sahara

I

Gezabi

Cette ville actuellement déserte est située à 5 kilomètres au sud-sud-ouest d'Aney et à 3 kilomètres au sud du petit village de Lotey, en bordure du désert, à égale distance des deux extrémités de la palmeraie du nord du Kawār. Elle figure sur la carte de l'IGN de Dirkou au 1/200.000 sous le signe conventionnel indiquant un «piton non rocheux».

Il subsiste actuellement une butte de forme ellipsoïdale longue de 470 mètres du nord au sud et large de 300 mètres. Le terrain tout autour est rigoureusement plat sauf à l'est où la palmeraie, contenant des petites dunes de sable, arrive au pied de la colline. Dans la plaine, en particulier au sud-ouest, on peut voir des traces d'implantation humaine (jardins, carrières ou habitations) jusqu'à 1200 mètres environ. Le point culminant est à 15 mètres au-dessus de la plaine, situé approximativement au centre des ruines. La surface de la butte est jonchée de tessons de poterie, de bijoux étrangers à la région et de tapis originaires du nord et l'on distingue les traces de nombreuses habitations. Par endroits les ruines sont totalement effondrées et n'apparaissent que sous forme de monticules. Ailleurs, en particulier dans les zones ouest, nord-ouest et nord, plusieurs murs de sel sont encore bien conservés. Au nord-est il est possible de distinguer les restes d'une mosquée connue des habitants de la région. Ils signalent également que le quartier nord, en contrebas, était réservé aux forgerons et appellent *dendal* un vallon coupant la butte dans le quadrant nord-ouest, dans le sens sud-ouest nord-est et se dirigeant vers la mosquée. Ils prétendent aussi que Gezəbi était un *bīrni* entouré d'une mur d'enceinte et certains croient savoir qu'il était percé de 7 portes, mais il n'en subsiste aucune trace actuellement. Les habitants, appelés Djelmana, se seraient battus contre les Tubus pendant 7 ans, 7 mois et 7 jours avant d'être vaincus.

Les murs dans la partie méridionale ont en grande partie disparu car le matériau a probablement été réutilisé pour bâtir un village plus récent au sud-est, muni d'un *gasar*[1]. Il est actuellement abandonné mais on trouve encore à Aney et à Emi Tchouma des personnes qui y sont nées. A l'époque de Barth (1859, III, 619) et de Nachtigal (1879, I, 541) Gezəbi était inhabitée, ce qui indique une réutilisation du site de brève durée à la fin du siècle dernier. Les informateurs indiquent qu'ils ont dû quitter Gezəbi, chassés par les termites, pour se réinstaller au pied du piton d'Emi Tchouma et ce n'est que depuis l'arrivée des Français qu'ils occupent le village actuel, plus éloigné de la falaise. Ces navettes illustrent bien la mobilité de la population et les relations étroites qui existaient entre ces différents types d'habitat.

A 2 kilomètres à l'est-sud-est de Gezəbi se trouve une petite construction en terre salée mêlée de pierres, de 5 mètres sur 11 mètres appelée *ankili*. C'est là que l'on enturbannait les sultans Tomagra. Il existe un autre *ankili* à l'ouest de Dirkū, dont la fonction était la même (non visité).

La première mention incontestable de Gezəbi dans les sources écrites est dûe à al-Idrīsī[2] au milieu du XII[e] siècle. Du nord au sud du Kawār cet auteur énumère successivement 5 villes portant toutes des noms propres, sauf la première, appelée *al-Qasaba*[3], «la citadelle». Or le site de Gezəbi se trouve précisément à l'extrémité nord de l'oasis et l'importance de la colline, tranchant nettement avec tout le paysage aux alentours, suggère fortement que les restes d'habitations ne recouvrent aucune butte naturelle, mais des couches successives de ruines. Tous les habitants du Kawār s'accordent à voir dans Gezəbi la ville la plus ancienne de la

1 Terme d'origine arabe employé au Kawār pour désigner un édifice fortifié à l'intérieur d'une ville ou d'un village.
2 1866 (trad. de Goeje)/ 45.
3 Nom générique arabe qui, au Maghreb, désigne une citadelle.

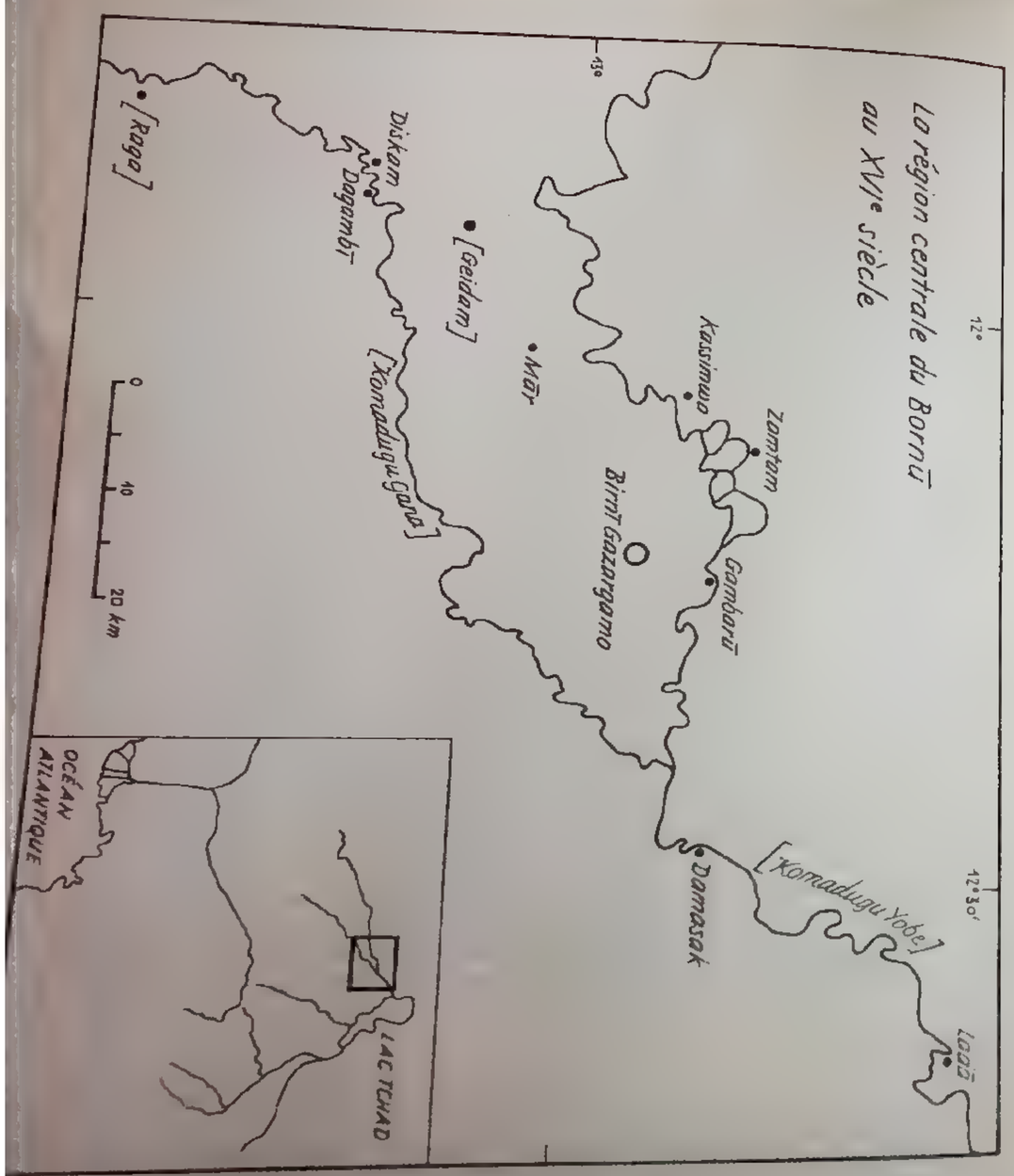
2

4

1

3

1 Agar Dallol de la façade nord s'ouvre sur la cour et la voie d'accès
2 Trois niveaux d'habitations en grande partie ruinés s'appuient à l'enceinte (hangar à droite) sur la face sud
3 Ancien village aujourd'hui abandonné au pied du rocher. Des restes de différentes époques sont visibles dans le sable. A l'horizon, le plateau de Gerasch et le désert du Ténéré
4 Vue générale du Darkoussa (Gherifa), point de départ de l'ascension du rocher. Au premier plan des palmiers hors de mur du rocher central
5 Djebo. Du haut des constructions sur le rocher. Au premier plan des palmiers hors de mur d'enceinte
6 Arbre. Façade est des murs sont en blocs de sel agglomérés
7 Gandérémé. Fragment sud ouest du rempart. On aperçoit l'emplacement de la porte ouest, à gauche, le mur de protection qui va vers le sud-est



chroniqueurs jusqu'à la première moitié du XIX^e siècle quand l'éviction de la dynastie des Sēfuwa interrompit la chaîne des transmetteurs.

Quand au milieu du siècle passé le voyageur Heinrich Barth séjourna au Bornū, il put encore se procurer deux copies du *Dīwān* ainsi que des copies de l'importante chronique d'Ibn Furtū dont il sera question plus bas.[4] Vingt ans plus tard Gustav Nachtigal essaya à son tour de retrouver des manuscrits anciens, mais on lui présenta seulement des listes dynastiques semblables à celles qu'on trouve encore aujourd'hui dans de nombreux villages du Bornū[5]. Amputées de toute la riche nomenclature géographique du *Dīwān*, ces listes ne contiennent que les noms des rois, ainsi que l'indication de leur filiation paternelle et la durée de leur règne; elles se signalent par de nombreuses inexactitudes[6]. D'autres documents à contenu historique ont été mis au jour au début de ce siècle par H. R. Palmer, mais ces écrits ne représentent le plus souvent que des transcriptions de traditions orales de peu de valeur exécutées à la demande de Palmer lui-même[7].

Le champs de la documentation portant sur l'histoire ancienne du Kānem/Bornū reste par conséquent jusqu'à nos jours confiné aux mêmes limites étroites qu'à l'époque de Barth et il est très peu probable que l'on découvre dans l'avenir d'autres manuscrits anciens à l'intérieur du Bornū. Mais si les tentatives entreprises pour augmenter le nombre des sources internes furent vouées à l'échec, rien n'aurait dû décourager les efforts entrepris pour la mise en valeur des sources disponibles. Or, dans ce domaine presque tout reste encore à faire.

Très significatif à cet égard est le peu d'attention accordée jusqu'à présent à la riche nomenclature géographique transmise dans le *Dīwān*. En effet, les auteurs de cet ouvrage indiquent pour chacun des rois successifs son lieu de sépulture et ils mentionnent en outre quelques autres noms de lieux pour situer des événements importants. En tout on trouve dans le *Dīwān* 51 noms géographiques différents concernant la période allant du X^e au début du XIX^e siècle. Trois de ces noms désignent des régions lointaines (Egypte, Fezzān [Zeila], Malī), cinq des régions du Sudan Central (Bagirmi, Bornū, Kaghā, Kānem, Kawār) et les 43 noms restants semblent désigner des villages – ou des agglomérations plus importantes – situés dans la région du lac Tchad (au sens large). J'ai moi-même signalé que onze noms étaient identifiables du fait de leur mention dans d'autres sources[8], mais seuls huit d'entre eux ont pu être localisés avec précision (Alaw, Birnī Gazargamo, Dammasak, Dirkū, Kano, Ladā, Ngala, Siggedim)[9]. La majeure partie de la nomenclature géographique du *Dīwān* – 35 noms dont 33 ont trait à des règnes antérieurs au XVII^e siècle[10] – était donc jusqu'à présent tout à fait inutilisable par les historiens et on ne pouvait même pas être assuré que ce type de données ait été préservé avec la même fidélité que les indications sur les durées de règnes dont on sait qu'elles ont permis d'établir une chronologie très précise[11].

4 Barth 1857 (II): 16.
5 Nachtigal 1879 (II): 393–399.
6 J'ai montré que les différentes listes dynastiques connues dépendent toutes d'une version ou d'une autre du *Diwan* (Lange 1977: 8–10).
7 1928 (II).
8 Lange 1977: 66–82 (cf. en particulier *Dīwān* §§ 4, 9, 17, 19, 26, 48, 50, 54, 66).
9 Les trois villes dont l'existence nous est également signalée par d'autres sources sont Djimī, Malūn et Zamtam (cf. *Diwan*, trad. §§ 4, 17, 19, 21, 26, 29, 38, 49, 51).
10 La plupart des rois sefuwa appartenant au XVII^e, au XVIII^e et au début du XIX^e siècle furent en effet enterrés à Birnī Gazargamo qui devint la capitale du Bornu sous le règne de ʿAlī Ghadjidēn (c. 1465–1497).
11 Cf. Lange 1977: 83–94.

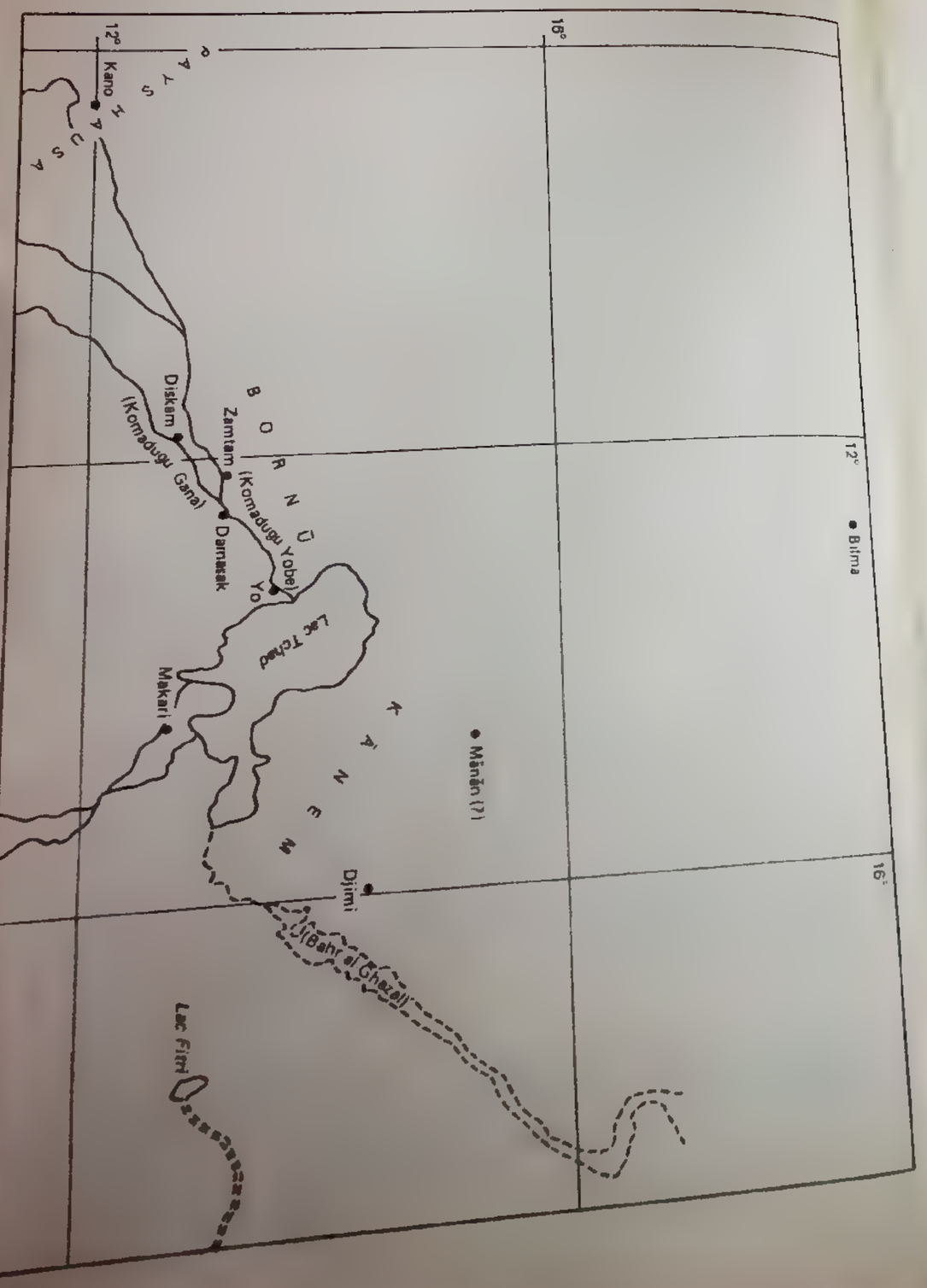


Fig. 1. Le Sudan Central au XIII[e] et XIV[e] siècles. Echelle 1:4,000,000.

on notera avec intérêt que son lieu de sépulture, Zamtam, se trouve au centre du Bornū, à 140 km à l'ouest du lac Tchad.[23]

Ecrivant trois siècles et demi plus tard, Ibn Furṭū fait référence aux mêmes événements, mais il ne peut s'appuyer que sur des traditions orales. D'après lui les hommes de l'entourage du roi s'étaient opposés à la destruction du *munē*:

> Mais [Dūnama] refusa de suivre leur avis. Il défit la chose ancienne et on dit que quand il l'eut ouverte, ce qui était à l'intérieur s'envola, faisant appel aux hommes puissants qui avaient le désir et l'ambition de posséder du pouvoir et du prestige. Et en effet, au temps de Dūnama b. Dabalē eut lieu la guerre entre lui et la tribu des Tubu. La guerre et les conflits internes entre lui et les Tubu dura sept ans, sept mois et sept jours.[24]

À l'instar des auteurs du *Dīwān*, Ibn Furṭū laisse entendre que Dūnama, suite à son acte sacrilège, devait faire face à une opposition interne. Mais cette fois-ci, ses principaux adversaires sont désignés clairement: il s'agit en l'occurrence des Tubu auxquels s'étaient joints certains 'hommes puissants qui avaient le désir et l'ambition de posséder du pouvoir et du prestige'. On peut supposer que ces hommes étaient des dignitaires de l'État sēfuwa et il n'est pas exclu que leur chef de file fut précisément le fils du sultan auquel il est fait allusion dans le *Dīwān*. L'alliance des ces 'personnages assoiffés de pouvoir' avec les Tubu devait constituer une menace très sérieuse pour les Sēfuwa, car tout fait penser que depuis le rapprochement entre les Sēfuwa et les Tubu à la fin du XI[e] siècle, cette population semi-nomade vivait déjà disséminée dans les différentes régions du Kānem comme à l'époque d'Ibn Furṭū (quand les Tubu seront les principaux alliés des Bulāla).[25] On peut donc considérer que le conflit entre Dūnama Dībalāmi et les Tubu se déroula dans la province centrale des Sēfuwa et on est en droit de penser qu'il affectait profondément l'ensemble de la population sédentaire du Kānem qui, en raison de la politique d'islamisation, était sans doute divisée en partisans et adversaires des Sēfuwa. Nous ne connaissons pas l'issue de la guerre civile, mais l'image très sombre que les sources internes présentent du grand réformateur musulman pourrait faire penser que l'alliance de ses adversaires a pu le contraindre à se replier vers la fin de son règne au Bornū. Une telle interprétation des données pourrait expliquer sans trop de difficultés, semble-t-il, pourquoi en 1257 le roi du Kānem règna (en fait?) sur le Bornū.

Mais de là il serait trop osé de conclure que durant la deuxième moitié du XIII[e] siècle le Kānem échappa à la domination des Sēfuwa. Il existe en effet plusieurs indications montrant que les troubles survenus durant le règne de Dūnama Dībalāmi n'avaient pas sérieusement ébranlé la puissance de l'Empire des Sēfuwa. Un premier indice est fourni par la fondation au Caire de la *madrasa* Ibn Rashīq, réalisée dans les années qui suivirent 640 H (1242) pour le bénéfice des étudiants originaires du Kānem.[26] Un indice plus

[23] Cf. D. Lange, 'Les lieux de sépulture des rois Sēfuwa (Kānem-Bornū): textes écrits et traditions orales', *Paideuma*, 25 (1979), 149–51.

[24] *K. ghazawāt fī Kānim*, fols. 123–4; tr. Redhouse, 122.

[25] *Op. cit.* Moins bien renseigné sur la situation ethnique au Kānem, Ibn Fāṭima situe les Tubu aux abords du 'Nil d'Egypte' (= Bahr al-Ghazal), cf. Lange, 'La région du lac Tchad', 165; tr. 169 et note p. 180

[26] Cf. al-'Umarī, *Masālik al-abṣār*, tr. Gaudefroy-Demombynes, 46; v.a. al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, ed. G. Wiet (Cairo, between 1911 and 1927), III, ii, 266; tr. J. M. Cuoq, *Recueil des*

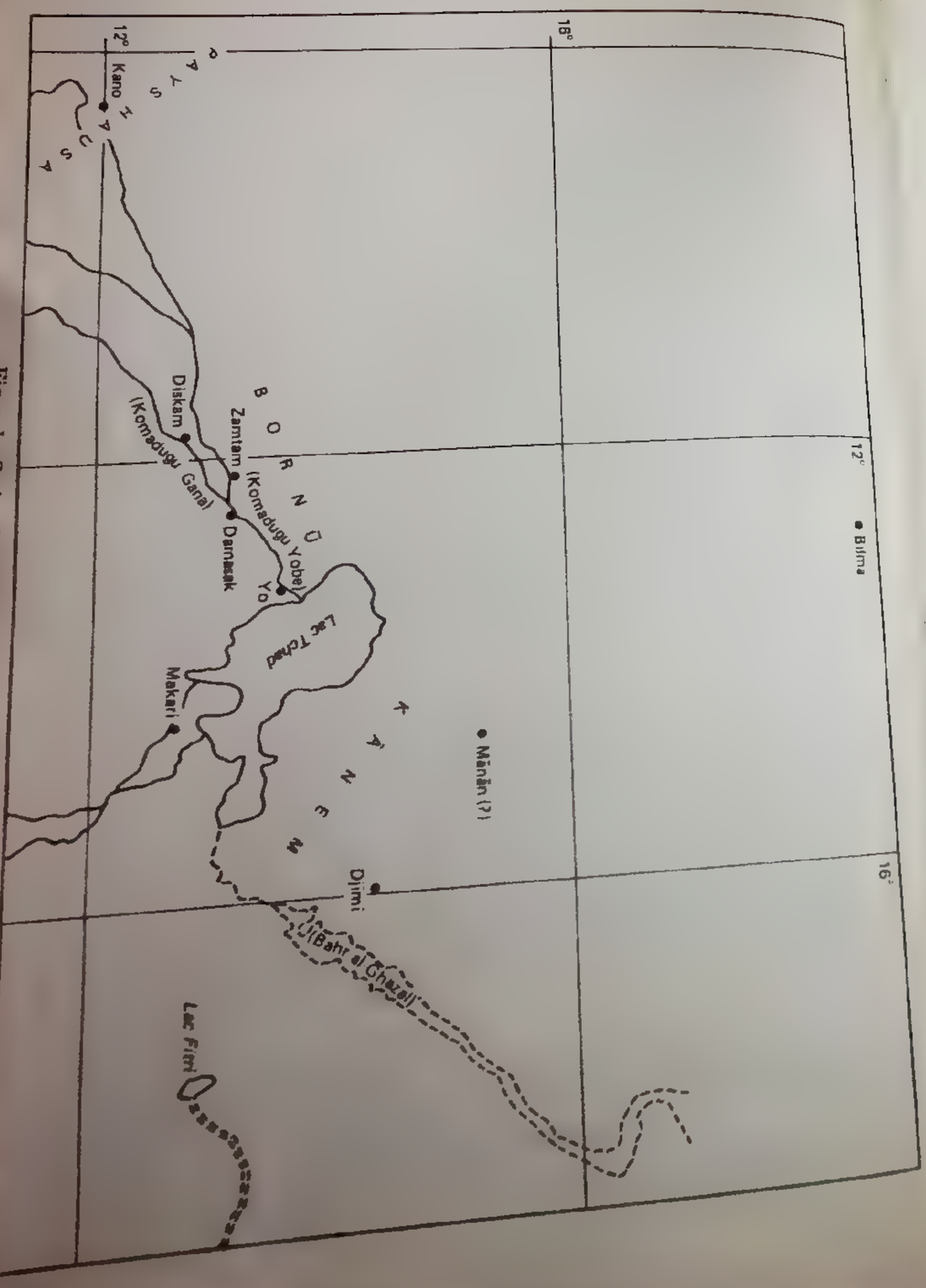


Fig. 1. Le Sudan Central au XIII[e] et XIV[e] siècles. Echelle 1:4,000,000.

on notera avec intérêt que son lieu de sépulture, Zamtam, se trouve au centre du Bornū, à 140 km à l'ouest du lac Tchad.[23]

Ecrivant trois siècles et demi plus tard, Ibn Furṭū fait référence aux mêmes événements, mais il ne peut s'appuyer que sur des traditions orales. D'après lui les hommes de l'entourage du roi s'étaient opposés à la destruction du *munē*:

> Mais [Dūnama] refusa de suivre leur avis. Il défit la chose ancienne et on dit que quand il l'eut ouverte, ce qui était à l'intérieur s'envola, faisant appel aux hommes puissants qui avaient le désir et l'ambition de posséder du pouvoir et du prestige. Et en effet, au temps de Dūnama b. Dabalē eut lieu la guerre entre lui et la tribu des Tubu. La guerre et les conflits internes entre lui et les Tubu dura sept ans, sept mois et sept jours.[24]

À l'instar des auteurs du *Dīwān*, Ibn Furṭū laisse entendre que Dūnama, suite à son acte sacrilège, devait faire face à une opposition interne. Mais cette fois-ci, ses principaux adversaires sont désignés clairement: il s'agit en l'occurrence des Tubu auxquels s'étaient joints certains 'hommes puissants qui avaient le désir et l'ambition de posséder du pouvoir et du prestige'. On peut supposer que ces hommes étaient des dignitaires de l'État sēfuwa et il n'est pas exclu que leur chef de file fut précisément le fils du sultan auquel il est fait allusion dans le *Dīwān*. L'alliance des ces 'personnages assoiffés de pouvoir' avec les Tubu devait constituer une menace très sérieuse pour les Sēfuwa, car tout fait penser que depuis le rapprochement entre les Sēfuwa et les Tubu à la fin du XI[e] siècle, cette population semi-nomade vivait déjà disséminée dans les différentes régions du Kānem comme à l'époque d'Ibn Furṭū (quand les Tubu seront les principaux alliés des Bulāla).[25] On peut donc considérer que le conflit entre Dūnama Dībalāmi et les Tubu se déroula dans la province centrale des Sēfuwa et on est en droit de penser qu'il affectait profondément l'ensemble de la population sédentaire du Kānem qui, en raison de la politique d'islamisation, était sans doute divisée en partisans et adversaires des Sēfuwa. Nous ne connaissons pas l'issue de la guerre civile, mais l'image très sombre que les sources internes présentent du grand réformateur musulman pourrait faire penser que l'alliance de ses adversaires a pu le contraindre à se replier vers la fin de son règne au Bornū. Une telle interprétation des données pourrait expliquer sans trop de difficultés, semble-t-il, pourquoi en 1257 le roi du Kānem règna (en fait?) sur le Bornū.

Mais de là il serait trop osé de conclure que durant la deuxième moitié du XIII[e] siècle le Kānem échappa à la domination des Sēfuwa. Il existe en effet plusieurs indications montrant que les troubles survenus durant le règne de Dūnama Dībalāmi n'avaient pas sérieusement ébranlé la puissance de l'Empire des Sēfuwa. Un premier indice est fourni par la fondation au Caire de la *madrasa* Ibn Rashīq, réalisée dans les années qui suivirent 640 H (1242) pour le bénéfice des étudiants originaires du Kānem.[26] Un indice plus

[23] Cf. D. Lange, 'Les lieux de sépulture des rois Sēfuwa (Kānem-Bornū): textes écrits et traditions orales', *Paideuma*, 25 (1979), 149–51.

[24] *K. ghazawāt fī Kānim*, fols. 123–4; tr. Redhouse, 122.

[25] *Op. cit.* Moins bien renseigné sur la situation ethnique au Kānem, Ibn Fāṭima situe les 'Tubu aux abords du "Nil d'Egypte" (= Bahr al-Ghazal), cf. Lange, 'La région du lac Tchad', 165; tr. 169 et note p. 180.

[26] Cf. al-'Umarī, *Masālik al-abṣār*, tr. Gaudefroy-Demombynes, 46; v.a. al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, ed. G. Wiet (Cairo, between 1911 and 1927), III, ii, 266; tr. J. M. Cuoq, *Recueil des*

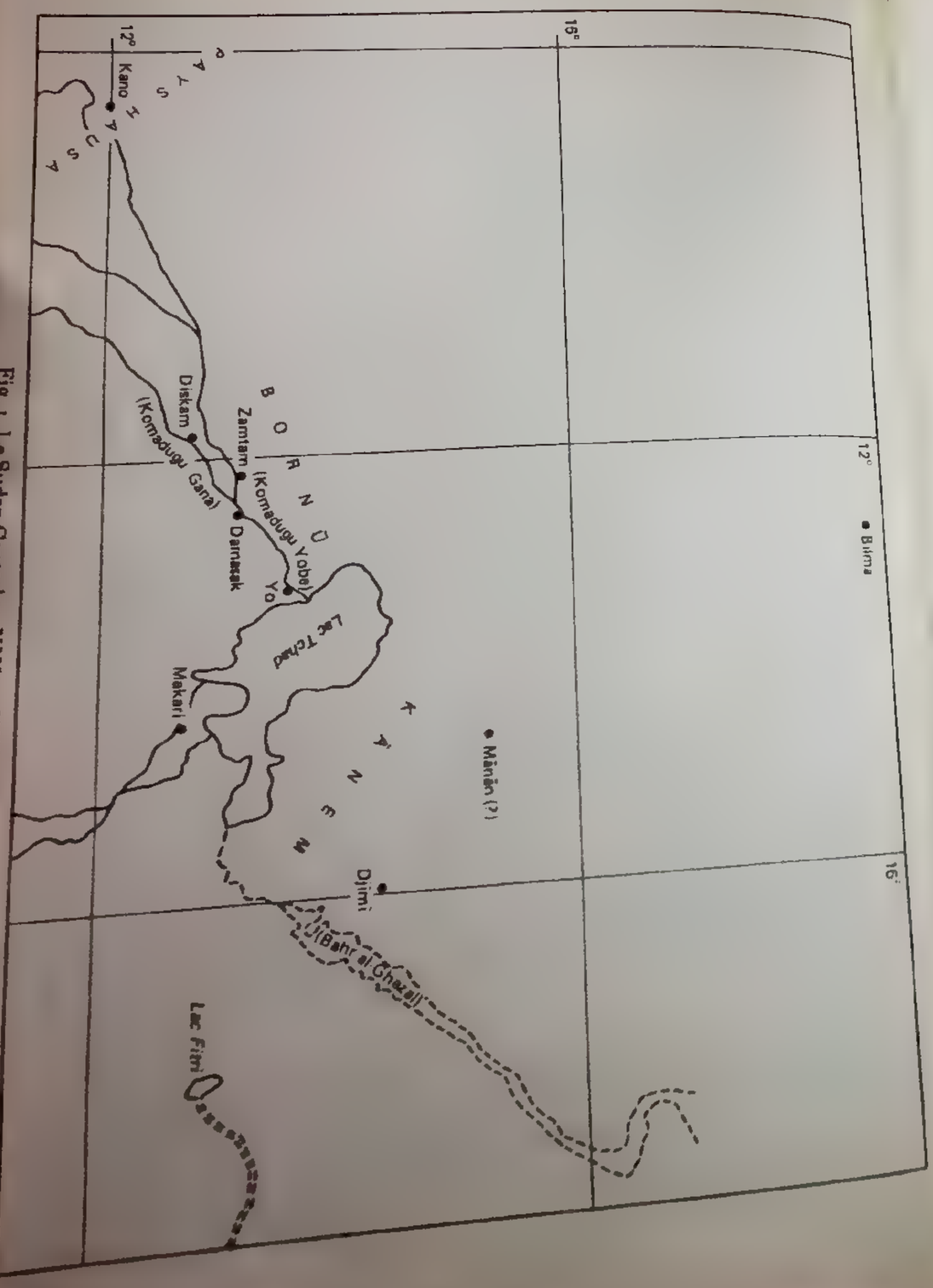


Fig. 1. Le Sudan Central au XIII[e] et XIV[e] siècles. Echelle 1:4,000,000.

on notera avec intérêt que son lieu de sépulture, Zamtam, se trouve au centre du Bornū, à 140 km à l'ouest du lac Tchad.[23]

Ecrivant trois siècles et demi plus tard, Ibn Furṭū fait référence aux mêmes événements, mais il ne peut s'appuyer que sur des traditions orales. D'après lui les hommes de l'entourage du roi s'étaient opposés à la destruction du *munē*:

> Mais [Dūnama] refusa de suivre leur avis. Il défit la chose ancienne et on dit que quand il l'eut ouverte, ce qui était à l'intérieur s'envola, faisant appel aux hommes puissants qui avaient le désir et l'ambition de posséder du pouvoir et du prestige. Et en effet, au temps de Dūnama b. Dabalē eut lieu la guerre entre lui et la tribu des Tubu. La guerre et les conflits internes entre lui et les Tubu dura sept ans, sept mois et sept jours.[24]

À l'instar des auteurs du *Dīwān*, Ibn Furṭū laisse entendre que Dūnama, suite à son acte sacrilège, devait faire face à une opposition interne. Mais cette fois-ci, ses principaux adversaires sont désignés clairement: il s'agit en l'occurrence des Tubu auxquels s'étaient joints certains 'hommes puissants qui avaient le désir et l'ambition de posséder du pouvoir et du prestige'. On peut supposer que ces hommes étaient des dignitaires de l'État sēfuwa et il n'est pas exclu que leur chef de file fut précisément le fils du sultan auquel il est fait allusion dans le *Dīwān*. L'alliance des ces 'personnages assoiffés de pouvoir' avec les Tubu devait constituer une menace très sérieuse pour les Sēfuwa, car tout fait penser que depuis le rapprochement entre les Sēfuwa et les Tubu à la fin du XI[e] siècle, cette population semi-nomade vivait déjà disséminée dans les différentes régions du Kānem comme à l'époque d'Ibn Furṭū (quand les Tubu seront les principaux alliés des Bulāla).[25] On peut donc considérer que le conflit entre Dūnama Dībalāmi et les Tubu se déroula dans la province centrale des Sēfuwa et on est en droit de penser qu'il affectait profondément l'ensemble de la population sédentaire du Kānem qui, en raison de la politique d'islamisation, était sans doute divisée en partisans et adversaires des Sēfuwa. Nous ne connaissons pas l'issue de la guerre civile, mais l'image très sombre que les sources internes présentent du grand réformateur musulman pourrait faire penser que l'alliance de ses adversaires a pu le contraindre à se replier vers la fin de son règne au Bornū. Une telle interprétation des données pourrait expliquer sans trop de difficultés, semble-t-il, pourquoi en 1257 le roi du Kānem règna (en fait?) sur le Bornū.

Mais de là il serait trop osé de conclure que durant la deuxième moitié du XIII[e] siècle le Kānem échappa à la domination des Sēfuwa. Il existe en effet plusieurs indications montrant que les troubles survenus durant le règne de Dūnama Dībalāmi n'avaient pas sérieusement ébranlé la puissance de l'Empire des Sēfuwa. Un premier indice est fourni par la fondation au Caire de la *madrasa* Ibn Rashīq, réalisée dans les années qui suivirent 640 H (1242) pour le bénéfice des étudiants originaires du Kānem.[26] Un indice plus

[23] Cf. D. Lange, 'Les lieux de sépulture des rois Sēfuwa (Kānem-Bornū): textes écrits et traditions orales', *Paideuma*, 25 (1979), 149–51.

[24] *K. ghazawāt fī Kānim*, fols. 123–4; tr. Redhouse, 122.

[25] *Op. cit.* Moins bien renseigné sur la situation ethnique au Kānem, Ibn Fāṭima situe les Tubu aux abords du 'Nil d'Egypte' (= Bahr al-Ghazal), cf. Lange, 'La region du lac Tchad', 165; tr. 169 et note p. 180.

[26] Cf. al-'Umarī, *Masālik al-abṣār*, tr. Gaudefroy-Demombynes, 46; v.a. al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, éd. G. Wiet (Cairo, between 1911 and 1927), III, ii, 466; tr. J. M. Cuoq, *Recueil des*

région plus méridionale au début de la période Sēfuwa. Mais les conditions de la vie sédentaire se déterioraient aussi sur les frontières méridionales et orientales du Kānem: alors qu'au début du XIII[e] siècle le Baḥr al-Ghazāl était encore alimenté par les eaux du lac Tchad, l'abaissement des eaux du lac au-dessous d'un certain seuil semble avoir conduit au XIV[e] siècle à l'assèchement de l'ensemble de la vallée.[65] En revanche, au Bornū le débit de la Komadugu Yobe devait rester à peu près constant, permettant aux riverains de pratiquer une agriculture intensive.[66] En raison des conditions de vie plus propices au Bornū, certains groupes de cultivateurs kanuriphones (ou plus généralement: des locuteurs de langues sahariennes) ont sans doute émigré très tôt en direction de l'ouest. Mais étant donné que des groupes de locuteurs de langues tchadiques – appelés collectivement les Soo – occupaient déjà les meilleures terres, ce mouvement migratoire, précédant l'implantation des Sēfuwa dans cette région, n'a vraisemblablement pas pu prendre des dimensions considérables.[67]

La cause principale de l'enracinement des Sēfuwa au Bornū doit donc être cherchée ailleurs. Il était sans doute beaucoup plus conforme à la nature aristocratique et guerrière de l'état sēfuwa d'étendre sa domination sur des communautés diverses – qui, par leurs activités agricoles, ou artisanales et commerciales, avaient pu atteindre un certain degré de prospérité – que de limiter son emprise à l'ensemble relativement homogène des groupes kanuriphones. Or, on admet en général que ce n'est qu'à partir du XIV[e] siècle que certaines communautés hausa commençèrent à devenir des foyers actifs du commerce interrégional. Mais le silence des sources externes n'est pas une raison suffisante pour exclure un développement plus ancien de certaines villes hausa. Quand al-Maqrīzī, au début du XV[e] siècle, note qu'après la perte

[65] D'après les analyses polliniques effectuées par J. Maley, le niveau de +286 m., permettant le déversement des eaux du lac Tchad, ne semble avoir été atteint que durant le premier millénaire de notre ère et, de nouveau, durant le XVI[e] siècle. En revanche, au XIII[e] siècle les eaux du lac Tchad n'auraient atteint, d'après cet auteur, qu'un niveau moyen (cf. 'Les variations du lac Tchad depuis un millénaire'. *Palaeoecology of Africa*, IX, 1976, 44–7). Il est permis de douter de la validité de ces résultats pour ce qui est de la première moitié du XIII[e] siècle car Ibn Saʿīd précise, sur la base du témoignage oculaire du voyageur Ibn Fāṭima, que le roi du Kānem possédait dans la localité de Nayy, située au bord du 'Nīl d'Egypte' (= le Baḥr al-Ghazāl), 'une promenade et un bateau de plaisance', ce qui montre que le Baḥr al-Ghazāl devait à cette époque être rempli d'eau (cf. Lange, 'La région du lac Tchad', 164; tr. 168).

[66] D'après le témoignage d'Ibn Fāṭima, la région de Djādjā – correspondant sans doute à la vallée de la Komadugu Yobe – était particulièrement luxuriante (cf. Lange, 'La région du lac Tchad', 163; tr. 167; v.a. 174–5).

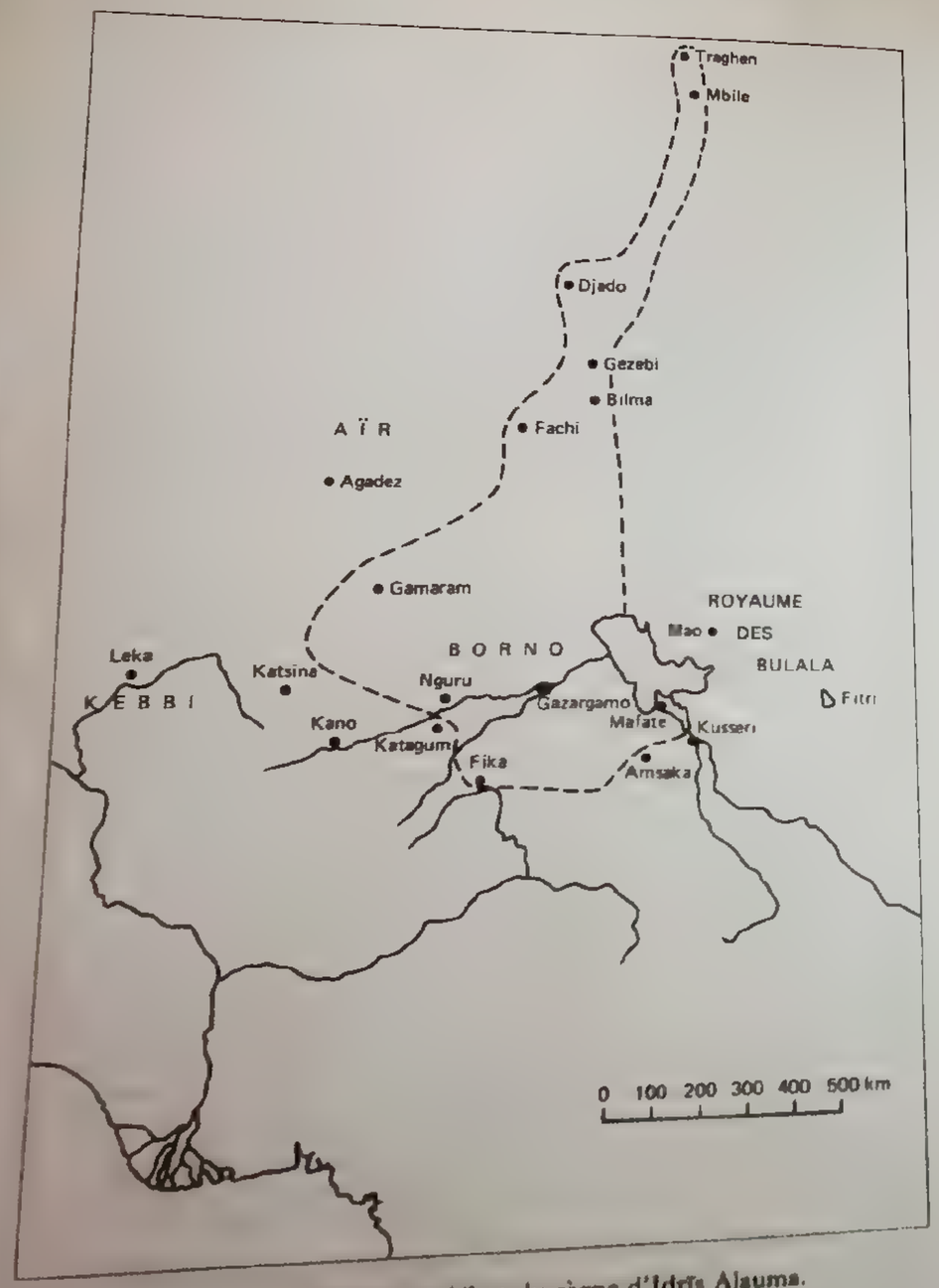
[67] Nous savons par Ibn Furṭū qu'un grand nombre de villages situés entre Zimbam (Dapchi) et Damasak, le long de la Komadugu Gana et de la Komadugu Yobe, étaient, au début de la deuxième moitié du XVI[e] siècle, encore habités par des Soo (Ghafata) (*K. Barnū*, SOAS, Londres, ms. 1384a, fols. 11–28; tr. J. Redhouse dans *J. Roy. Asiat. Soc.* 19, 1862, 207–19). Durant mes recherches sur le terrain en vue de la réédition du *K. Barnū*, j'ai pu établir que certains villages Soo étaient situés à une distance de moins de cinq kilomètres de Birnī Gazargamo, l'ancienne capitale du Bornū fondée sous le règne de 'Alī Ghadjidēni (*c.* 1465–97). Par ailleurs, on sait grâce aux fouilles de G. Connah que la localité de Yo, située à une distance de 21 km du lac Tchad, était du IX[e] au XV[e] siècle habitée par des pêcheurs autochtones ('Recent contribution to Bornu chronology', *W. Afr. J. Archaeol.* 1 (1971), 58–9). L'importance de cette localité peut être déduite du fait qu'elle a donné son nom à la Komadugu Yobe (car 'komadugu Yo-be' = en kanuri: 'fleuve de Yo').

du Kānem, douze autres royaumes restaient soumis au Bornū, ce nombre incluait certainement plusieurs cités-états hausa.[68] Rien n'exclut de penser que dès la deuxième moitié du XIII[e] siècle les rois Sēfuwa cherchaient à étendre leur emprise vers l'ouest afin de pouvoir contrôler et exploiter à leur propre bénéfice les nouveaux foyers d'activité commerciale. Au Bornū ils étaient évidemment beaucoup mieux placés pour faire sentir leur poids politique et militaire qu'au Kānem. Mais leur éloignement du Kānem devait à son tour conduire à des pertes que seuls les gains sur leur frontière occidentale pouvaient faire compenser.

SUMMARY

The Sēfuwa dynasty seized power in Kānem around 1075, but it was only in the beginning of the thirteenth century that the rulers of Kānem were able to extend their authority over Bornū. Prior to this move small groups of Saharan speakers had already established themselves among the Chadic speakers of the Komadugu Yobe valley. Towards the end of the reign of Dūnama Dībalāmi (*c.* 1210–48) the court of the Sēfuwa itself was shifted to Bornū, mainly as a result of disturbances in Kānem. Indeed, according to oral traditions of the sixteenth century, the Tubu, in alliance with certain members of the Sēfuwa aristocracy, staged a major rebellion against the central government, apparently attempting to resist the strict application of Islamic principles of government by Dūnama Dībalāmi. Towards the end of the thirteenth century powerful rulers were again able to establish the authority of the Sēfuwa on firm grounds: in the east, even on the fringes of Kānem, they brought the situation under strict control and in the west they extended – or confirmed – the political influence of the Sēfuwa dynasty over the focal points of interregional trade which began to rise in Hausaland. Thus Bornū became the central province of the Sēfuwa Empire in spite of the fact that several kings continued to reside temporarily in the old capital of Djīmī situated in Kānem. This major shift of their territorial basis affected the position of the Sēfuwa in their original homelands. Written sources from the end of the fourteenth century show that the increasing involvement of the Sēfuwa in Bornū and its western border states must have changed their attitude towards the people living east of Lake Chad: after having acquired the character of an autochthonous (or national) dynasty of Kānem – in spite of their foreign origin – the Sēfuwa progressively became an alien power in this major Sudanic state, even though the people of Kānem and Bornū were closely related. Furthermore, the rise of a powerful kingdom in the area of Lake Fitrī under the rule of the Bulāla became a serious threat to the Sēfuwa in their original homelands as the warrior aristocracy of the Bulāla state – which must have been of Kānembu origin – remained closely connected with the sedentary population of Kānem. When finally during the reign of 'Umar b. Idrīs (*c.* 1382–7), the Sēfuwa were forced by the Bulāla to withdraw their forces from Kānem, this territorial loss did not affect the future development of the Empire to the extent that has formerly been supposed, since losses in the east were largely compensated by earlier gains in the west.

[68] Cf. *supra*, n. 51.



Map. 1. Le Borno au début du règne d'Idrīs Alauma.

Il n'y a qu'un auteur dont les renseignements sur les dignitaires titrés de l'époque des Sayfuwa revêtent un caractère strictement contemporain: l'*imām* Aḥmad b. Furṭū. Cet auteur bornoan composa deux ouvrages, le *K. ghazawāt Barnū* ('les expéditions du Borno') en 1576[5] et le *K. ghazawāt Kānim* ('les expéditions du Kanem') en 1578.[6] Dans ces ouvrages il fit le récit des expéditions guerrières entreprises par *Mai* Idrīs Alauma (1564–96) et par ses grands officiers durant les quatorze premières années du règne de ce grand souverain. Bien que leur sujet soit la guerre, les deux ouvrages contiennent de nombreux renseignements à partir desquels on peut faire des déductions sur l'organisation interne du royaume en temps de paix.

Manifestement l'auteur attachait une grande importance aux titres: aucun officier supérieur ou subalterne n'est en effet mentionné sans que son nom ne soit précédé d'un titre.[7] L'*imām* Aḥmad est amené ainsi à faire mention de 37 titres au total et il cite un nombre encore plus élevé de titulaires. Mais, ce qui est plus important, l'information qu'il donne sur les différents officiers titrés à propos de leurs actions militaires sont suffisamment détaillées pour que l'on puisse en déduire des renseignements sur leur position hiérarchique et parfois aussi sur les spécificités de leurs fonctions. Confrontés aux indications fournies par Nachtigal, d'un côté, et aux observations faites par des anthropologues dans des royaumes voisins du Borno, de l'autre, les informations contenues dans les ouvrages d'Ibn Furṭū permettent d'aboutir à une description assez détaillée de l'organisation politique bornoane au XVI^e siècle.[8]

Dans le présente étude on traitera de trois dignités dont la signification avait jusqu'à present échappé aux chercheurs, car l'*imām* Aḥmad cite les titres correspondants en arabe: *al-wazīr al-kabīr* ('le grand vizir'), *al-rā'id al-kabīr* ('le grand pionnier') et *ḥājib* ('chambellan'). En fait, ces titres devaient être portés par des hommes placés à des niveaux très élevés de l'échelle hiérarchique des officiers bornoans, car *Mai* Idrīs charge les titulaires en question des missions militaires de la plus grande importance. Et pourtant, contrairement à la plupart des titres mentionnés par Ibn Furṭū sous leur forme kanuri, la tradition bornoane n'en a conservé aucune trace. Les titres arabes n'ont pas non plus survécu au Damagaram ni au Fitri, deux royaumes dont l'organisation politique dérive manifestement de celle des Sayfuwa;[9] on n'en trouve pas non plus trace ni à Daura ni à Logone Birni, également très influencés par la

[5] Cf. Lange, *A Sudanic Chronicle: the Borno Expeditions of Idrīs Alauma (1564–1576) according to the Account of Aḥmad b. Furṭū. Arabic Text, English Translation and Geographical Gazetteer* (Stuttgart, 1987). Plus loin le *K. ghazawāt Barnū* sera cité comme *K. Barnū*.

[6] Cf. H. R. Palmer (éd.) *Ta'rīkh May Idrīs wa-ghazawātihi* (Kano, 1932), pp. 52–129; trad. J. W. Redhouse, 'Journal of the events which occurred during seven expeditions in the land of Kānim', *Journ. of the Roy. Asiatic Soc.*, 19 (1862), 43–123. Plus loin le *K. ghazawāt Kānim* sera cité comme *K. Kānim*.

[7] A titre d'exception on notera la mention d'un esclave du roi appelé Dirs al-Dubb ('Dent de l'ours') dont on ne sait si en fait il portait un titre ou non. Cf. Ibn Furṭū, *K. Barnū*, in Lange, *Sudanic Chronicle*, IX, § 13.

[8] L'auteur de ces lignes se propose de présenter ultérieurement un travail plus étendu sur ce sujet.

[9] Sur le sultanat du Damagaram (Zinder), voir A. Salifou, *Le Damagaram, ou sultanat de Zinder au XIX^e siècle* (Niamey, 1971), et A. Dunbar, 'Damagaram (Zinder, Niger), 1812–1906, the History of a Central Sudanic Kingdom' (Ph.D. Univ. de Californie Los Angeles, 1970). Sur le sultanat bulala du Fitri, voir F. Hagenbucher, 'Notes sur les Bilala du Fitri', *Cah. ORSTOM*, v, 4 (1968), 39–69.

il contrôlait sans doute une bonne partie des audiences accordées par le sultan, ce qui le faisait vraisemblablement le plus important intermédiaire entre les visiteurs du palais et le sultan. Cependant, tout en appartenant à la domesticité du sultan, il semble avoir été seulement un esclave et non pas un eunuque, de sorte que l'accès aux chambres intérieures du palais devait lui rester interdit.[77] A ce titre la fonction du *ḥājib* ressemblait à celle d'un *ḳapıdjı bāshı* ('chef des gardes des trois portes du palais') dans le système ottoman, bien que formellement, et par son influence, la dignité de *ḥājib* correspondait plutôt à celle du *ḳapı aghası* ou *ḳızlar agha* ('principal officier du palais') toujours détenue par un eunuque.[78] Quand Rohlfs, dans la deuxième moitié du XIX[e] siècle, compare la charge du *Mestrema* à celle du *ḳızlar agha*,[79] la fonction spécifique du *ḥājib* avait disparu au Borno, comme d'autre part aussi celle du *wazīr*.

On notera qu'il existait par ailleurs des *Cikama* d'un rang inférieur qui étaient chargés de garder les portes de la ville de Birni Gazargamo.[80] Apparemment Ibn Furṭū se sert du titre arabe de *ḥājib* pour souligner que Saka était un dignitaire de haut rang employé au palais et non pas un officier responsable d'une des portes de la capitale.[81]

La validité de cette analyse est confirmée par l'enquête anthropologique. Dans la chefferie du Munio subsiste jusqu'à nos jours l'office d'un *Cikama* (pron.: *cígàmà* ou *címà*) dont le détenteur est responsable des clefs du palais royal, rôle dans lequel nous pouvons voir une survivance des tâches d'un 'chambellan'.[82] Le titre de *Cikama* a également survécu à Zinder[83] où – apparemment pour un laps de temps très court – cette dignité a été assimilée au début du XX[e] siècle à la dignité d'un *wazīr*.[84]

On a vu que l'exégèse des écrits d'Ibn Furṭū permet de soulever le voile jeté par la terminologie arabe sur les noms kanuri de certains titres sayfuwa. La même méthode permet d'aboutir à des indications précises quant au rang occupé par les titulaires et elle fournit des indices précieux quant à leurs fonctions. D'autres aspects de l'organisation politique de l'Etat sayfuwa au XVI[e] siècle, tel que le statut social des grands officiers et leur insertion dans la structure gouvernementale, peuvent être déduits à partir des renseignements fournis par les voyageurs du XIX[e] siècle et de l'étude comparative des institutions effectuée auprès des royaumes vassaux des Sayfuwa. A cet égard il faut cependant souligner que des extrapolations à partir de ce qu'on connaît des périodes récentes ne peuvent toucher qu'à des aspects relativement

[77] Bien que le term *'abd* ('esclave') puisse s'appliquer à la limite aussi à un *khaṣī* ('eunuque') – terme qu'Ibn Furṭū n'emploie jamais – l'existence de la dignité eunuque de *Jiroma* et, probablement aussi, celle de *Mestrema* semblent exclure que le *Cikama* était un eunuque.

[78] Cf. Mantran, 'Kapıdjı'; Inalcik, 'Kapı aghası'; Bosworth, 'Ḳız', *Enc. de l'Islam*, 2ème éd., v, 240–1.

[79] Rohlfs, *Quer durch Afrika*, II, 3. La comparaison avec le *ḳızlar agha* ne lui a probablement pas été suggérée au Borno car elle ne figure pas dans *Reise durch Nord-Afrika*.

[80] Cf. Koelle, *African Native Literature*, 420.

[81] Ibn Furṭū mentionne deux officiers portant le titre de *Cikama* qui étaient apparemment des gardiens des portes de la ville: *Cikama* Bumu (*K. Barnū*, II, §6) et *Cikama* Muḥammad b. Farkuma (*ibid.*, II, §25).

[82] *Enquête du 7/1/1985.*

[83] Cf. Salifou, *Damagaram*, 127.

[84] Au début de l'occupation française, le *Cikama* Salifou était aussi appelé *Waziri* (cf. 'Le sultanat de Zinder, 1938' *in Archives I.R.S.H.*, n. 18, p. 5).

généraux de l'organisation politique bornoane. En plus, il faut s'assurer dans chaque cas que l'apparente similitude quant au rang ou la fonction d'une dignité ou d'une autre institution politique correspond réellement à une stabilité institutionnelle et non pas à un effet du hasard. Ce n'est qu'en prenant de grandes précautions dans le maniement des sources non contemporaines qu'on peut espérer aboutir à une reconstitution de l'organisation politique du Borno à l'époque médiévale, ce qui permettra de dépasser l'histoire politique dans laquelle nous enferment les textes. Ainsi certaines réalitiés sociales et institutionnelles pourront être dégagées et intégrées dans l'histoire sans que l'on ne soit dupe d'une chimère.

SUMMARY

Little attention has until now been directed to the rich information on title-holders contained in the two chronicles of the imām Aḥmad b. Furṭū written in 1576 and 1578 respectively. This neglect is partly due to the very confusing style of the imām's writing. In particular, he refers to the three highest ranking Bornoan officials by translating their Bornoan titles into Arabic: the Digma is called 'al-wazīr al-kabīr', the great Jarma 'al-rā'id al-kabīr', and the Cikama 'al-ḥājib'. Once the meaning of these Arabic titles is decoded it appears that the political organisation of sixteenth century Borno owes very little to the Islamic model. Furthermore it becomes clear that the commander of the Bornoan corps of musketeers was the great Jarma, an official of Ngizim origin, and not a Turkish military instructor as one may have suspected.

However, since Ibn Furṭū is mainly concerned with military activities, only a few functions of the three high-ranking court officials emerge from his account; others have to be inferred from the information provided by nineteenth-century European travellers and from more recent anthropological accounts. In Borno the political organisation of the Sayfuwa state fell to pieces in the first half of the nineteenth century, when al-Amīn al-Kānemī and his successors built up a new system of administration. This progressively supplanted the old system, which was based on a great number of court titles and attendant offices. Important elements of the political organisation of the Sayfuwa survive until the present day in some former vassal states of Borno which became independent in the course of the nineteenth century or earlier.

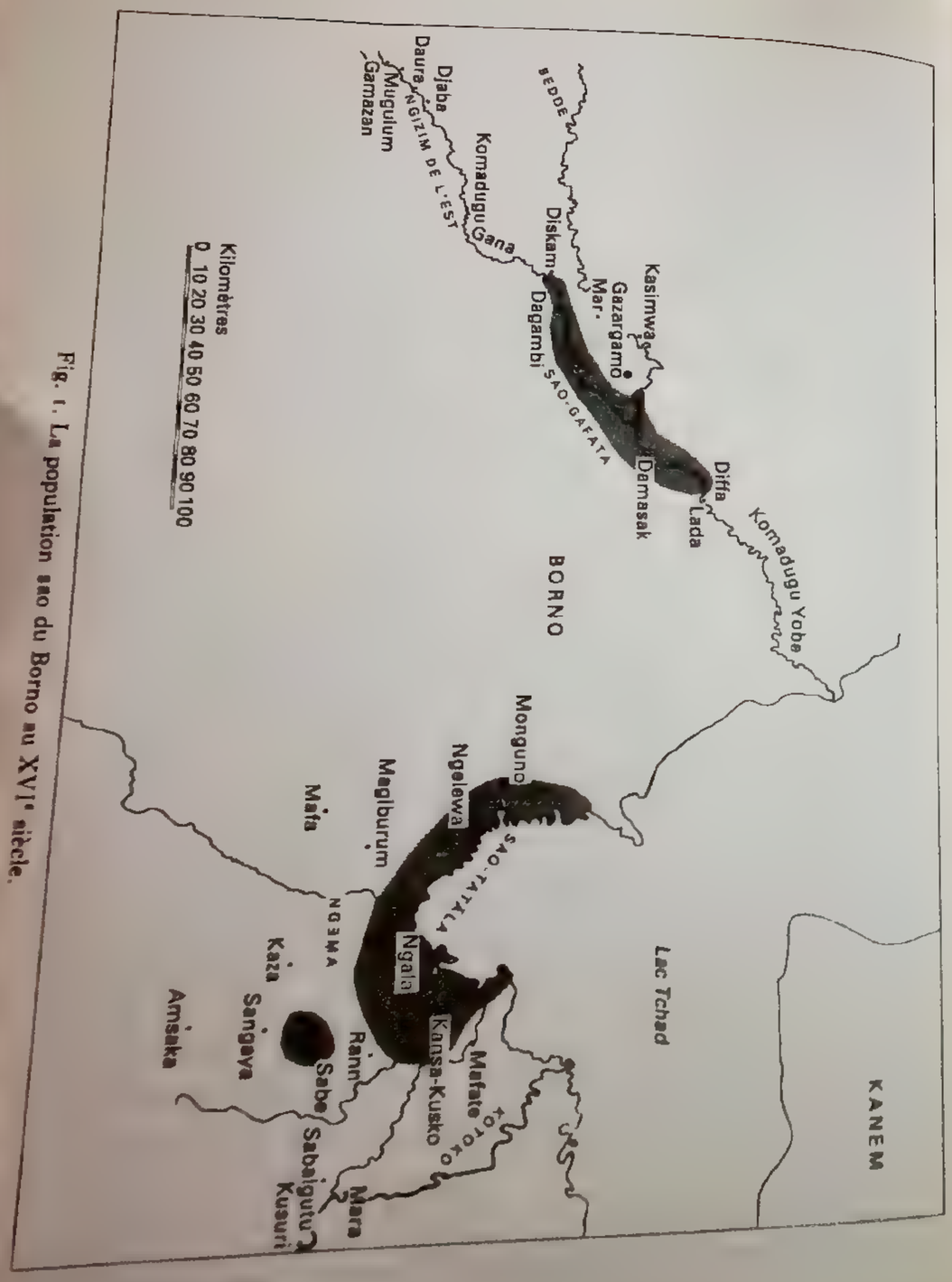


Fig. 1. La population sao du Borno au XVI[e] siècle.

les plaines d'inondation de la Komadugu Yobe et de la Komadugu Gana, et les Sao-Tatala la plaine *firki*, au sud-ouest du lac Tchad. La nature offrait une remarquable protection aux Sao-Gafata: leurs villages étaient en effet entourés d'épais fourrés, impénétrables aux envahisseurs à cheval.[42] Quant aux Sao-Tatala, ils étaient surtout protégés par la proximité du lac Tchad: en cas d'attaque ils pouvaient aisément se réfugier sur les îles du grand lac.[43] Entre ces deux régions fertiles s'étendait une zone sablonneuse très sèche et peu propice à l'agriculture. Les immigrants du Kanem pouvaient s'y établir avec leurs animaux sans se heurter à des communautés paysannes. Par contre, les plaines argileuses étaient occupées par des sédentaires autochtones dont l'éviction ne pouvait se faire que par la force des armes.

A en croire à Ibn Furṭū, les Sao étaient des adversaires irréductibles des musulmans du Borno. Or, ceci ne pouvait s'appliquer réellement ni aux Sao-Gafata, ni à une grande partie des habitants du pays *firki*. Les premiers avaient, certes, la possibilité de se retrancher derrière les remparts d'une nature luxuriante, mais rien n'indique qu'ils avaient eu recours à ce stratagème pendant la période de désordre qui avait précédé l'avénement d'Idrīs Alauma.[44] En effet, ils n'avaient cessé de fournir un tribut puisque Ibn Furṭū précise que ce fut seulement à la suite de la grande offensive déclenchée par les musulmans contre les populations des environs de Gazargamo que ces derniers refusèrent de verser le tribut d'usage.[45] En réalité, face à la détermination de leurs adversaires musulmans, les Sao-Gafata établis dans la région située entre Dagambi et Diffa n'avaient pas le choix: s'ils n'avaient pas pris les armes pour se défendre contre l'aggression, ils auraient sans doute été réduits à la captivité et transplantés dans une région lointaine. Lorsque les habitants de Damasak, la plus grande localité des Sao-Gafata, durent se rendre à l'issue d'une résistance acharnée, ils furent d'abord faits esclaves, puis, pour des raisons inconnues, massacrés.[46]

Les Sao-Tatala furent beaucoup moins exposés aux exactions de leurs adversaires du Borno. Jouissant loin de la capitale d'une situation géographique plus favorable, ils avaient manifestement cessé depuis longtemps de payer un tribut. D'après Ibn Furṭū ils occupaient la région qui s'étendait entre Monguno et Sabe d'une part et le lac Tchad de l'autre.[47] A partir de cette région, les Sao-Tatala auraient poussé leurs raids jusqu'à Magīburum et jusqu'à Mafa,[48] deux villes qui devaient par conséquent être soumises aux Sayfuwa. Quand ils étaient menacés par les Kanuri, les Sao-Tatala se retiraient dans les marécages du lac Tchad. D'après cette description, le pays Tatala correspondait à la région marécageuse des abords du lac Tchad. Ses

[41] Les Sao-Gafata essayèrent d'en empêcher la destruction par les Kanuri (*K. Barnū*, II §§ 9, 11, 15, 41).

[42] *Ibid.*, VIII §§ 6, 15, 17, 18. Les habitants des îles du lac Tchad se désignent eux-mêmes comme Yedina. Nachtigal estime à raison, semble-t-il – que ce nom dérive de celui de Yedi, vieille 'ville sao' située à proximité du lac Tchad dont une partie des habitants se serait retirée devant les immigrants du Kanem sur les îles du lac (Nachtigal, *Sahara*, II, 489).

[43] Ibn Furṭū évoque à une seule reprise leur trahison vis-à-vis du Borno, mais ne peut en aucune manière étayer ce reproche (*K. Barnū*, II, § 27).

[44] *Ibid.*, II § 9. [45] *Ibid.*, II §§ 21–25.

[46] Pour l'identification de Sabe cf. Lange, *Sudanic Chronicle*, 160.

[47] *K. Barnū*, VIII § 5. Pour l'identification de Magīburum et de Mafa cf. Lange, *Sudanic Chronicle*, 149.

Lors du transfert de la cour royale du pays de Kāgha à la région de la Komadugu, les Sao de la plaine du Tchad avaient cessé depuis longtemps d'être des sujets loyaux et accommodants des Sayfuwa. Durant la période des luttes dynastiques, ils avaient commencé à prendre parti pour l'un ou l'autre des candidats en présence. En définitive, ce ne fut donc pas l'hostilité globale des Sao à l'égard de la maison royale qui rendit le pays du Tchad nuisible pour le bon fonctionnement d'une administration centrale, mais la participation de la population autochtone aux luttes internes des milieux dirigeants. Par contre, dans le pays nouvellement colonisé de la Komadugu, les Sayfuwa présentaient face aux autochtones une façade sans failles. Quand ils décidèrent d'appliquer le nom de 'Sao' à ce nouvel ensemble de populations, ils le firent certes en pensant aux 'Sao' de la plaine du Tchad, mais dans cette dernière région le processus d'assimilation avait fait passer les populations autochtones du status d'une 'population protégée' à celui d'une population intégrée et particllement hostile. En somme, l''hostilité' des Sao-Tatala et la 'loyauté' des Sao-Gafata reflètent en proportion inverse le degré d'intégration à la société kanuri de deux ensembles ethniques au départ parfaitement hétérogènes.

SUMMARY

The identity of the Sao to the south of Lake Chad has remained obscure despite the efforts of archaeologists, ethnographers and historians. To solve the problem, it is necessary to look at the historical circumstances in which they passed into legend as the ancestors of the present occupants of the region, namely the creation of the empire of Borno to the west and south of the lake in place of Kanem to the north-east. The conflicts involved in this creation lasted from the beginning of the thirteenth to the seventeenth century, and produced the main historical references to the Sao apart from oral tradition, always as enemies of the new rulers among the native population. The first applies to the fourteenth century, but all the others are from the contemporary record of the campaigns of Mai Idrīs Alauma by Ibn Furṭū in the sixteenth century, where we learn of the Sao-Gafata in the neighbourhood of the Bornoan capital Gazargamo, and of the Sao-Tatala on the flood-plain south-west of the lake. Elsewhere on the flood-plain, the various peoples are referred to by recognisably modern names: Ngəma, Makari, Kotoko. It seems probable that in the work of Ibn Furṭū we find the last use of a term which the incoming Kanembu had originally used to describe all the inhabitants of their new Bornoan dominions, then employed as an adjective for each particular population, until with the suppression of the Sao-Gafata and Sao-Tatala it was abandoned except as the name of a legendary people ancestral to Kanuri and non-Kanuri groups alike. The most probable explanation of the term itself is that it meant 'city' or 'city-dwellers', describing the inhabitants of the walled villages or towns of the flood-plain as perceived by their conquerors the Sayfuwa rulers of Kanem-Borno at the outset of their imperial adventure.

Paideuma 39, 1993

ETHNOGENESIS FROM WITHIN THE CHADIC STATE
Some Thoughts on the History of Kanem-Borno[1]

DIERK LANGE

The contemporary evidence pertaining to the medieval history of the region of Lake Chad is relatively abundant. Nevertheless it is insufficient to derive from it a clear picture with respect to the ethnic basis of the Kanem-Borno empire. Situated on the crossroads of influences from the Nile valley and North Africa, Kanem-Borno was the major state of the Central Sudan throughout the medieval period. Its domination extended in the south to the Sao principalities and Bagirmi, in the west to Hausaland and in the north to Fezzān. All the other states which emerged in this vast area were the result of secondary developments. To designate this major polity by the term Chadic state seems to be a convenient compression for the cumbersome geographical concept Kanem-Borno, while indicating at the same time that the administration was not exclusively controlled by members of the ruling dynasty.[2]

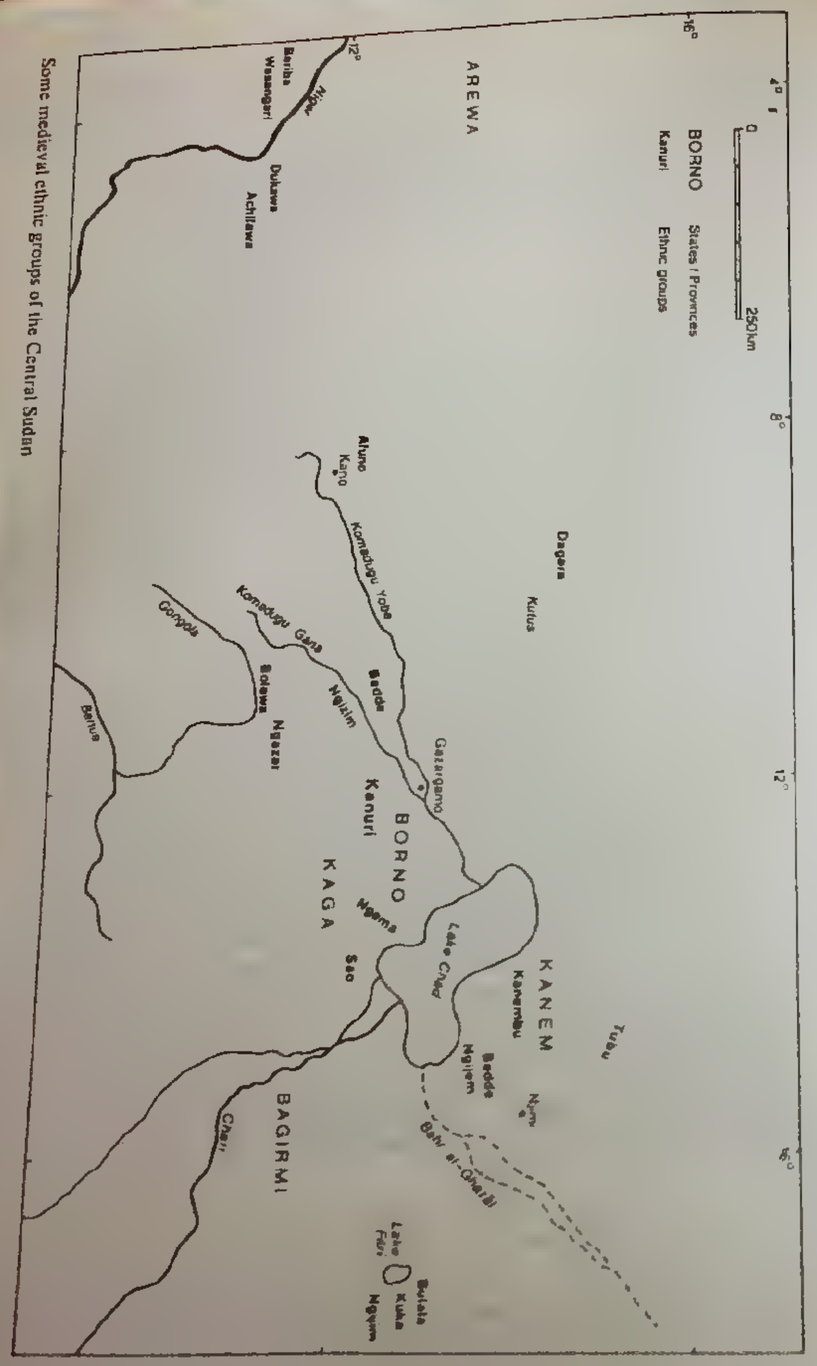
With the model of the European nation-state in mind historians took it for granted that the medieval West-African empires were based on a well-defined territory and that they developed out of a particular ethnic substratum. The analysis of the relevant traditions of origin of the great West African people shows that the ethnic groups concerned emerged all in more recent times than the states they are supposed to have founded. This is true for the Soninke of Ghana, the Malinke or Maninka of Mali, the Songhay of Gawgaw as well as for the Kanuri of Kanem-Borno.

If therefore we turn our attention to the analysis of the major historical events which occurred in the Central Sudan from the eleventh to the fifteenth century we should take care not to consider individual people as the main subjects of the historical narrative. Also it would be wrong to assume that in the Chad region the state was an administrative structure imposed on specific tribes living each in its own territory. What emerges instead is the concept of a state which has to be defined in terms of its dynastic components. Particular ethnic groups should be conceived through their own traditions of origin, although in actual fact these belong in each case solely to the ruling elite.

The events concerned are the following: first, the rise of the Sayfuwa and the consecutive fall of the Duguwa in about 1068; second, the abolition of the Amun cult by Dunama Dibalemi (1203–1242); third, the surrendering of the Kanem province to the Bulala in the second half of the fourteenth century and fourth, the foundation of Gazargamo by 'Ali Gaji (1455–1487).

1 A first version of this paper was presented at the 17th International Conference of Historical Sciences, Madrid, 27–31 Aug. 1990.

2 It goes without saying that the term Chadic, here applied to the main state of the Chad region, is to be distinguished from the term Chadic languages, first used by Greenberg to identify a particular family of Afro-Asiatic languages (1966: 45).



Before giving an account of these events a word of caution should be voiced: our main sources, internal and external, all centre on the two successive ruling dynasties of Kanem-Borno. Therefore it must be recognized that the official sources of later periods have a strong bias in favour of Kanem, the homeland of the Sayfuwa, but completely disregard Hausaland.[3] Further, it should be noted that the royal chronicle of the Sayfuwa, the *Dīwān*, gives hardly any geographical information since it focuses entirely on events of dynastic significance. This again applies only to the main ruling house and not to any dynastic offsplits, although the latter emerged at times as powerful opponents to the main political forces. In particular the *Dīwān* carefully conceals the role of the Duguwa in the history of Kanem-Borno.

1. The Rise of the Sayfuwa

First we are concerned with the overthrow of the Duguwa - or Zaghāwa as they are called in the external sources - by the Sayfuwa. As far as we know this event occurred shortly before the Almoravid-inspired take-over in Ghana.[4] Most scholars seem now to be convinced that such a dynastic change did in fact take place in the Chad region and that the Sayfuwa, whom the first European travellers met in Borno during the nineteenth century, were not the first dynasty to have ruled over the Central Sudan in spite of their vehement claims to such.[5] Therefore - instead of trying to convince the stragglers - it would now appear to be more important to determine the scope of the political change involved. The available evidence as such is certainly not sufficient to find any straightforward answer to this question. Hence it will be suggested here that a better understanding of the process of ethnogenesis through dynastic groups will throw new light on this particular event - as also on others - and that it will allow us to get a better grasp of certain characteristics of the medieval West-African state than would be possible through the narrow reliance on the available texts.

In the first place it should be noted that the early Arab geographers and historians refer in general to the great Chadic kingdom not under the territorial name Kanem, but only under the tribal name Zaghāwa. Only al-Ya'qūbī, in the ninth century, links the two notions by providing the important information that the Zaghāwa were living in Kanem.[6] Now, it would appear on the basis of structural similitude that the name Zaghāwa is actually connected with the dynastic name Duguwa, which the authors of the *Dīwān* applied in an Arabic form to the early rulers of Kanem. Therefore, if the name Zaghāwa is collectively applied to the inhabitants of the Kanem kingdom since the early ninth - or perhaps the early eighth[7] - century this would seem to imply that Dugu, the eponymous founder of the kingdom, must belong to a much earlier period. An early date for the foundation of Kanem

3 *Dīwān*, 1977; Ibn Furtū, 1987
4 Lange, 1977: 95-112; *id.*, 1993b (forthcoming)
5 Lange, 1977: 95-129; Zeltner, 1980: 38-45; Cuoq, 1984: 236-243; Hallam, 1987: 33-46. Some authors are reluctant to accept the idea that Hummay was the founder of a new dynasty (Lavers, 1982: 123; Barkindo, 1984: 235; Nur Alkali, 1987: 57).
6 *K. al-ta'rīkh* part. transl. in Hopkins and Levtzion, 1981: 21.
7 Wahb b. Munabbih in Ibn Qutayga, *K. al-ma'ārif* part. transl. in Hopkins and Levtzion, 1981: 15

would appear to be consistent with the seventh century expedition of the Arab conqueror 'Uqbā b. Nāfi' to Fezznā and Kawār.[8] Indeed, this expedition to an area far away from the Mediterranean world can best be explained if the way had been paved by earlier trade links between the region of Lake Chad and the north.[9] The kingdom of Kanem, the emergence of which was partly a consequence of trans-Saharan trade, may therefore have been founded earlier than was hitherto supposed.

From the twelfth century onwards Arab writers no longer use the name Zaghāwa with respect to the Central Sudan. Instead they continually employ the name Kanem, while the name Zaghāwa is applied to a tribal group living in the area between Kanem and Nubia. What had happened? It can be shown that the reason for this geographical and semantic shift was the occurrence of dynastic disturbances in the course of which the Duguwa were replaced by the Sayfuwa who claimed to descend from the Yemenite hero Sayf b. Dhī Yazan. According to the internal evidence provided by the *Dīwān* the fall of the Duguwa took place around the year 1068, i.e. shortly before the dynastic change in Ghana.[10] And in fact, apart from this synchronism there are several other reasons, in particular the Berber origin of Ḥummay, the founder of the Sayfuwa dynasty, which lead on to suppose that the dynastic change in Kanem is linked to the religious and political turmoil created by the Almoravids in the western Sahara and Sudan.[11] An external account from 1067–8 gives some support to the idea that there was an important opposition force in Kanem with foreign links since it notes the presence of descendants of the Umayyads among the inhabitants of Kanem. These 'Umayyads' would appear to have been supporters of Ḥummay (1068–1080).[12]

Considering the elements presented so far it would seem that the dynastic change corresponded to a major political upheaval in the course of which a group of Berbers assumed power in Kanem.[13]

The following arguments can be brought forward in favour of such a thesis: first, the disappearance of the name Zaghāwa from the external record as a consequence of the dynastic change; second, the survival of the Duguwa in Kanem in the form of a subservient caste of blacksmiths and elsewhere as minor rulers (Dukawa, Wasangari); third, the simultaneity with the Almoravid-inspired activities in Ghana and Gaogao. These different elements would, at first sight, seem to suggest that the local Duguwa were defeated by foreign Berbers.

In fact, it can be shown that the conquest theory is in this case based on false assumptions and that actually the rise of the Sayfuwa corresponded more to a rebellion staged by court officials than to a major ethnic upheaval. Indeed, it should be fully appreciated that none of the testimonies referring to the early history of the Sayfuwa points to a radical change of the political set-up of the state. It could, of course, be argued that the court

8 Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ Miṣr*, and al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, part. transl. in: Hopkins and Levtzion, 1981: 12–13, 18.
9 Lange and Berthoud, 1977: 19–22.
10 Note that Ḥummay and other Kanem-Borno rulers of the medieval period had previously been given later dates (Lange, 1977: 82–94).
11 Lange, 1988: 460; Lange, 1993b (forthcoming).
12 Al-Bakrī, *Masālik al-abṣār*, transl. in: Hopkins and Levtzion, 1981: 64.
13 Lange, 1977: 95–112.

historians were eager to rewrite the dynastic history of Kanem in such a way that any suspicion concerning the usurpation of power by the Sayfuwa was discarded. But still, if it was possible to write a chronicle only one and a half centuries after the event with the main purpose to conceal the break in the dynastic continuity – and this certainly was the main purpose of the *Dīwān* – then the event itself cannot possibly have corresponded to a military take-over staged by foreign invaders. Furthermore, it should be noted that the twelfth century – as will be seen – must have been a period of peaceful coexistence between the Duguwa and the Sayfuwa. Therefore the impression created by the disappearance of the name Zaghāwa from the records should not be considered as sufficient evidence for any major ethnic change. Later it will become apparent that the shift of names points to a process of dynastic readjustments but that this process was about to be reversed towards the end of the fourteenth century when the name Zaghāwa – in its form Zaghāy – was once more used in the reports given by knowledgeable informants from the Central Sudan to North-African scholars.

A supplementary remark must concern the role of Islam in the advent of the Sayfuwa. No doubt, the new religion was the most important single factor which led to the fall of the Duguwa in Kanem and to the rise of the Sayfuwa. The authors of the *Dīwān* make it clear that Ḥummay was not the first Islamic ruler of Kanem, but that he was preceded by two Duguwa rulers, Ḥawwā' and 'Abd al-Jalīl, who were already Muslims.[14] The short rule of these kings – which for each lasted only four years – as well as the fact that Ḥawwā' appears to have been a woman[15], tend to show that the Duguwa were no longer in command of the situation. We may therefore suppose that an Islamic party – comprising in particular various Berbers from a Saharan and perhaps an eastern background as well as Black African officials of the Duguwa court – was actively working towards the overthrow of the ruling dynasty. Indeed, the preparation of such a coup from within the ruling establishment presupposes the existence of a powerful common denominator or, more precisely, an ideological platform capable of welding together the different dynastic and non-dynastic factions which were opposed to the ruling section of the Duguwa. Obviously this was the case with Islam.[16]

Today the Duguwa survive within the Kanembu society as a caste of blacksmiths. They no longer remember that their ancestors once ruled over Kanem.[17]

II *The Abolishment of the Amun Cult*

The second major event in the history of Kanem-Borno is the destruction by Dunama Dibalemi (1203–1242) of the royal emblem called *mune*. What exactly this emblem was does not become apparent from the available texts. The *Dīwān* and Ibn Furṭū both refer to it vaguely as "a thing" and make its destruction appear to be a reprehensible act. As a result of the deliberate cutting or breaking to pieces of this undefined object various people

14 *Diwan*, 1977: § 10, 11.
15 Lange, 1978: 504.
16 Lange, 1993b (forthcoming).
17 Lange, 1977: 151–153; Conte, 1983: 55–142.

rebelled against the Sayfuwa. It is therefore appropriate to consider the *mune* incident in more detail.

Among the meagre information provided by the *Dīwān* the "cutting of the *mune*" emerges as an event of outstanding importance. From the phrasing used by the author it would appear that the object was considered by the people as being something sacred: "only God knew it". The two events mentioned next – the war against a certain Gāyu b. Lafrad and the dispersal of the princes – may be supposed to have been more or less direct consequences of the destroying of the royal emblem.[18]

Ibn Furṭū, writing in 1578, refers to the *mune* incident in his concluding remarks at the end of his two volume account of the reign of Sultan Idrīs Alauma. He claims that Sultan Dunama was warned by the people not to open the *mune* since it had been handed down from the early rulers of Kanem as a device to assure the victory of the Sayfuwa against their enemies. When, inspite of this warning, "he broke it open" the results were disastrous: "Henceforth the great people of the kingdom became greedy for power and rank".[19] Ibn Furṭū does not say who these powerful people were, but it is clear that he thought of them as members of the royal establishment. More specifically he asserts that the *mune* incident was responsible for the outbreak of a war between the Sayfuwa and the Tubu which lasted for the conventional time of "seven years, seven months and seven days".[20] He is furthermore of the opinion that even the Bulala wars, which started more than a century later, could have been avoided if the royal talisman – as Barth calls it – had not been opened.[21] Thus the opening – or destruction – of the *mune* caused a movement of widespread opposition among the great officiers of the state and it gave rise to tribal disturbances.

As for the actual shape of the *mune* Ibn Furṭū is hardly more specific than the *Dīwān*: apart from being a "thing" it was also an object from "ancient times" (*aṣl qadīm*). Furthermore, he considers the *mune* as having been something which was "encased in wrappers and covered up" being thus concealed from the eyes of the spectators. When Sultan Dunama had opened it "the thing which was contained therein flew away".[22]

It is not clear to what extent Ibn Furṭū relies in his account on oral traditions. He explicitly compares the *mune* with the qur'ānic *sakīna*[23] and quotes on its behalf Arabic lexicographers. These were in turn influenced by the *jinn*-like description given to the *sakīna* by the exegists of the Qur'ān.[24] It appears from the lexicographical definitions that a certain amount of pagan demonology was thought by these scholars to be compatible with their Islamic faith.[25] But surely, if the *mune* was a statue of the Egyptian god Amun, as is

18 *Dīwān*, 1977: § 17.
19 Ibn Furṭū, *K. ghazawāt Kānim*, ed. Palmer, 1932: 128; transl. Redhouse 1862: 92, 122.
20 Ibn Furṭū, *K. ghazawāt Kānim*, ed. Palmer, 1932: 99, 128; transl. Redhouse, 1862: 92, 122.
21 *Ibid.*, 128/transl. 122; Barth, 1857, II: 584.
22 Redhouse, 1862: 122.
23 *Qur'ān*, II, 248; IX, 26, 40; XLVIII, 4, 18, 26.
24 He quotes Ibn Fāris, *K. al-afrād*, and al-Fīrūzābādī, *al-Qāmūs*.
25 *Cf.* B. Joe, "Sakīna", *in*: Houtsma *et al.*, 1913, VII: 78.

suggested by its name,[26] neither the author of the *Dīwān* nor Ibn Furṭū would have used the word *ṣanam* (statue, idol) without wishing to insinuate that its worship was an unislamic practice. This and other reasons make it likely that Dunama Dibalemi actually abolished the main emblem of a cult inherited through the filter of Meroe from Ancient Egypt.[27]

Historians tend to see in the opening of the *mune* an important instance of the attempts of the Sayfuwa to promote Islam among the people of Kanem.[28] This interpretation agrees with the account of Ibn Sa'īd according to which Dunama Dibalemi was noted for his religious endeavours. It also makes sense of his shift of alliance from the Tubu to the Berbers, since it can hardly be doubted that the Berbers were better Muslims than the Tubu. However, it must be asked why Ibn Furṭū, who held the position of a grand Imam of Borno, criticizes Dunama Dibalemi for not having respected the symbol of royal power. Is it conceivable that such an outstanding religious and historical authority as the Imam Ibn Furṭū was not aware of the proselytizing fervour of the great Dunama, even if the latter ruled three and a half centuries before his time?[29] In fact, it must have been the disastrous consequences of the *mune* incident, which in the eyes of later observers, made it appear a sacrilegious act rather than a courageous assault against pagan idolatry. Indeed, we know that on the long run the Bulala opposition – which Ibn Furṭū considers to have been a result of the deplorable deed – proved extremely detrimental to the Sayfuwa.

According to the *Dīwān* the Bulala were the most dangerous enemies of the Sayfuwa throughout the late Middle Age. Dāwūd b. Nikale (1359–1369) is said to have been the first to wage war against them.[30] Ibn Furṭū explicitly states that they did not exist in the days of Dunama Dibalemi.[31] He believes that they came from the area of Lake Fitri (beyond the Bahr al-Ghazāl of Chad) and that from there they conquered Kanem. As the *Dīwān* he dates the outbreak of hostilities to the reign of Dāwūd b. Nikale.[32] Between 1369 and 1382 seven rulers of the Sayfuwa fell in war, six against the Bulala and one against the nomadic Arabs who were their allies.[33] If we further consider that the fighting between the Sayfuwa and the Bulala was resumed in the sixteenth century[34], it must be clear that the antagonism between the two groups must have arisen from very deep-rooted hatred.

26 In Meroitic the Egyptian name Amun is transcribed as Mni or Amni (Hofmann, 1981: 81). Palmer suggested already that *mune* stands for Amun but he did not explore the implications of this identification (1928, I: 75–76, 1936: 184–185). Historians – including myself – were up to now unwilling to explore this line of thought.
27 The kings of Napata and Meroe were supposed to be chosen by Amun (Török, 1986, 179, 196–7) and they were considered to be his sons (Török, 1988: 229–231). Amun is still represented in a Ballana crown found by modern archaeologists (Arkell, 1962: 181–2). Camps thinks that his importance for the Berbers has been exagerated (1980: 215–218).
28 Palmer, 1936: 184–5; Urvoy, 1949: 52–53; Trimingham, 1962: 106, 108, 117–8; Fisher, 1977: 290; Lange, 1978: 510–1; Zeltner, 1980: 47–49; Cuoq, 1984: 246–248. However, A. Smith rejects the idea that the opening of the *mune* was inspired by Islamic proselytism (1971: 173 n. 41).
29 Urvoy, 1949: 52–3; Smith, 1971: 173 n. 41.
30 *Diwān*, 1977: § 27.
31 *K. ghazawāt Kānim*, in: Palmer, 1932: 100; transl. Redhouse, 1862: 93.
32 *Ibid.*, 1926: 54, 128; transl. Redhouse, 1862: 46, 122.
33 *Ibid.*, 76–7.
34 Ibn Furtu, *K. ghazawāt Kānim*, Palmer, 1932: 54–6; transl. Redhouse, 1862: 46–8.

rebelled against the Sayfuwa. It is therefore appropriate to consider the *mune* incident in more detail.

Among the meagre information provided by the *Dīwān* the "cutting of the *mune*" emerges as an event of outstanding importance. From the phrasing used by the author it would appear that the object was considered by the people as being something sacred: "only God knew it". The two events mentioned next – the war against a certain Gāyu b. Lafrad and the dispersal of the princes – may be supposed to have been more or less direct consequences of the destroying of the royal emblem.[18]

Ibn Furṭū, writing in 1578, refers to the *mune* incident in his concluding remarks at the end of his two volume account of the reign of Sultan Idrīs Alauma. He claims that Sultan Dunama was warned by the people not to open the *mune* since it had been handed down from the early rulers of Kanem as a device to assure the victory of the Sayfuwa against their enemies. When, inspite of this warning, "he broke it open" the results were disastrous: "Henceforth the great people of the kingdom became greedy for power and rank".[19] Ibn Furṭū does not say who these powerful people were, but it is clear that he thought of them as members of the royal establishment. More specifically he asserts that the *mune* incident was responsible for the outbreak of a war between the Sayfuwa and the Tubu which lasted for the conventional time of "seven years, seven months and seven days".[20] He is furthermore of the opinion that even the Bulala wars, which started more than a century later, could have been avoided if the royal talisman – as Barth calls it – had not been opened.[21] Thus the opening – or destruction – of the *mune* caused a movement of widespread opposition among the great officiers of the state and it gave rise to tribal disturbances.

As for the actual shape of the *mune* Ibn Furṭū is hardly more specific than the *Dīwān*: apart from being a "thing" it was also an object from "ancient times" (*aṣl qadīm*). Furthermore, he considers the *mune* as having been something which was "encased in wrappers and covered up" being thus concealed from the eyes of the spectators. When Sultan Dunama had opened it "the thing which was contained therein flew away".[22]

It is not clear to what extent Ibn Furṭū relies in his account on oral traditions. He explicitly compares the *mune* with the qur'ānic *sakīna*[23] and quotes on its behalf Arabic lexicographers. These were in turn influenced by the *jinn*-like description given to the *sakīna* by the exegists of the Qur'ān.[24] It appears from the lexicographical definitions that a certain amount of pagan demonology was thought by these scholars to be compatible with their Islamic faith.[25] But surely, if the *mune* was a statue of the Egyptian god Amun, as is

18 *Dīwān*, 1977: § 17.
19 Ibn Furṭū, *K. ghazawāt Kānim*, ed. Palmer, 1932: 128; transl. Redhouse 1862: 92, 122.
20 Ibn Furṭū, *K. ghazawāt Kānim*, ed. Palmer, 1932: 99, 128; transl. Redhouse, 1862: 92, 122.
21 *Ibid.*, 128/transl. 122; Barth, 1857, II: 584.
22 Redhouse, 1862: 122.
23 *Qur'ān*, II, 248; IX, 26, 40; XLVIII, 4, 18, 26.
24 He quotes Ibn Fāris, *K. al-afrād*, and al-Fīrūzābādī, *al-Qāmūs*.
25 *Cf.* B. Joe, "Sakīna", *in*: Houtsma *et al.*, 1913, VII: 78.

suggested by its name,[26] neither the author of the *Dīwān* nor Ibn Furṭū would have used the word *ṣanam* (statue, idol) without wishing to insinuate that its worship was an unislamic practice. This and other reasons make it likely that Dunama Dibalemi actually abolished the main emblem of a cult inherited through the filter of Meroe from Ancient Egypt.[27]

Historians tend to see in the opening of the *mune* an important instance of the attempts of the Sayfuwa to promote Islam among the people of Kanem.[28] This interpretation agrees with the account of Ibn Sa'īd according to which Dunama Dibalemi was noted for his religious endeavours. It also makes sense of his shift of alliance from the Tubu to the Berbers, since it can hardly be doubted that the Berbers were better Muslims than the Tubu. However, it must be asked why Ibn Furṭū, who held the position of a grand Imam of Borno, criticizes Dunama Dibalemi for not having respected the symbol of royal power. Is it conceivable that such an outstanding religious and historical authority as the Imam Ibn Furṭū was not aware of the proselytizing fervour of the great Dunama, even if the latter ruled three and a half centuries before his time?[29] In fact, it must have been the disastrous consequences of the *mune* incident, which in the eyes of later observers, made it appear a sacrilegious act rather than a courageous assault against pagan idolatry. Indeed, we know that on the long run the Bulala opposition – which Ibn Furṭū considers to have been a result of the deplorable deed – proved extremely detrimental to the Sayfuwa.

According to the *Dīwān* the Bulala were the most dangerous enemies of the Sayfuwa throughout the late Middle Age. Dāwūd b. Nikale (1359–1369) is said to have been the first to wage war against them.[30] Ibn Furṭū explicitly states that they did not exist in the days of Dunama Dibalemi.[31] He believes that they came from the area of Lake Fitri (beyond the Baḥr al-Ghazāl of Chad) and that from there they conquered Kanem. As the *Dīwān* he dates the outbreak of hostilities to the reign of Dāwūd b. Nikale.[32] Between 1369 and 1382 seven rulers of the Sayfuwa fell in war, six against the Bulala and one against the nomadic Arabs who were their allies.[33] If we further consider that the fighting between the Sayfuwa and the Bulala was resumed in the sixteenth century[34], it must be clear that the antagonism between the two groups must have arisen from very deep-rooted hatred.

26 In Meroitic the Egyptian name Amun is transcribed as Mni or Amni (Hofmann, 1981: 81). Palmer suggested already that *mune* stands for Amun but he did not explore the implications of this identification (1928, I: 75–76, 1936: 184–185). Historians – including myself – were up to now unwilling to explore this line of thought.
27 The kings of Napata and Meroe were supposed to be chosen by Amun (Török, 1986, 179, 196–7) and they were considered to be his sons (Török, 1988: 229–231). Amun is still represented in a Ballana crown found by modern archaeologists (Arkell, 1962: 181–2). Camps thinks that his importance for the Berbers has been exagerated (1980: 215–218).
28 Palmer, 1936: 184–5; Urvoy, 1949: 52–53; Trimingham, 1962: 106, 108, 117–8; Fisher, 1977: 290; Lange, 1978: 510–1; Zeltner, 1980: 47–49; Cuoq, 1984: 246–248. However, A. Smith rejects the idea that the opening of the *mune* was inspired by Islamic proselytism (1971: 173 n. 41).
29 Urvoy, 1949: 52–3; Smith, 1971: 173 n. 41.
30 *Dīwān*, 1977: § 27.
31 *K. ghazawāt Kānim*, in: Palmer, 1932: 100; transl. Redhouse, 1862: 93.
32 *Ibid.*, 1926: 54, 128; transl. Redhouse, 1862: 46, 122.
33 *Ibid.*, 76–7.
34 Ibn Furṭū, *K. ghazawāt Kānim*, Palmer, 1932: 54–6; transl. Redhouse, 1862: 46–8.

Who were the Bulala? It would appear that present-day traditions offer valuable supplementary elements for the answer to this question. Considering the dynastic lists of the Bulala we notice that in the earlier part they are nearly identical with those of the Sayfuwa.[35] This may be partly due to the fact that some elements have been borrowed from the Sayfuwa lists in recent times. Nevertheless it shows at least that the Bulala think of themselves as being close relatives of the Sayfuwa. Such a contention is supported by the similarity existing between the titles used in the Bulala kingdom of Fitri and those of pre-Kanemi Borno.[36] As for their language it should be noted that the Bulala speak at present the language of their Kuka subjects as well as Arabic[37], but this does not preclude the possibility that they earlier spoke a Kanembu dialect.

Looking at the Bulala traditions of origin we find that they claim the same Yemenite origin as the Sayfuwa. This may have led Barth to suspect that Jīl Shikomēni, the royal ancestor, was a son of Dunama Dibalemi.[38] A better explanation for the close relationship between the Bulala and the Sayfuwa is offered by a Kanembu oral tradition recorded at the beginning of this century by the Colonial officer Landeroin. In Mao, the capital of Kanem, he was told by court officials that the Bulala were residing in Kanem before the arrival of the Sayfuwa from Yemen.[39] This tradition is consistent with an etymology proposed by Palmer according to which the Bulala name is derived from Bulu, the penultimate of the pre-Islamic rulers of the Duguwa.[40] Whatever the origin of their name it can hardly be doubted that the Bulala were part of the Duguwa ruling elite. They may even have been priests of the *Mune*/Amun cult.[41] The connection with the Duguwa is no longer known to the Bulala. This is, however, not surprising since after their last defeat at the hands of the Sayfuwa and their final expulsion from Kanem towards the end of the sixteenth century,[42] a Sayfuwa origin must have appeared more attractive to them than the reference to a dynasty the name of which mainly survived in the Duguwa caste of low standing. The situation was different in the fourteenth century when the Bulala must have still prided themselves – as we will see later – on being descendants of the Zaghāwa. It is this early genealogical claim which would seem to establish most clearly that the present petty rulers of Fitri were indeed closely related to the first dynasty of Kanem.[43]

In the mid-thirteenth century the Bulala were forced to withdraw to the area of Lake Fitri where they subdued the Kuka. One century later, however, they rose against the

35 Carbou, 1912: 302; Hagenbucher, 1968: 51.
36 Hagenbucher, 1968: 54-56.
37 Carbou, 1912: 293.
38 Barth, 1857, II: 586.
39 Landeroin, 1911: 353; Nachtigal was told that the Bulala were related to the Duguwa (Danoa) (1879, II: 261.)
40 *Dīwān*, 1977: § 8; Palmer, 1936: 217. Bulu is likely to correspond to the Christian name Paul (Lange, 1977: 67 n. 1).
41 Further to the west a particular spirit of the Bori and Holley pantheons is still called Bulala. In traditions of origin this name is sometimes reinterpreted in Islamic terms as referring to Bilāl b. Rabāh, the *mu'adhdhin* of the Prophet Muhammad.
42 At the time of Ibn Furtū (1578) the Sayfuwa ruler Idrīs Alauma tried to rule Kanem through the Bulala king Muhammad b 'Abd Allāh (Zeltner, 1980: 107-188).
43 I earlier failed to understand that the Bulala were descendants of the Duguwa ruling establishment (Lange, 1982: 315-331).

Sayfuwa who had temporarily reestablished their rule over Kanem. They forced the descendants of Hummay to abandon their earlier central province, but frequent inroads organized by their enemies obliged them to be on their guards by centering their power on both, Kanem and the region beyond the Bahr al-Ghazāl. Hence Ibn Furtū could have the impression that the Bulala had originated from the area of Lake Fitri. This situation was still basically the same at the beginning of the sixteenth century when Leo Africanus called the Bulala kingdom by the name Gaoga, perhaps derived from its Kuka inhabitants.

With these developments in mind we may now interpret the *mune* incident in the light of its consequences, among which the Bulala ethnogenesis was the most detrimental for the Sayfuwa. First and foremost it would appear that Hummay and his men, after their rise to power, were prepared to share the advantages of high office with their Duguwa rivals. Practically, the coexistence of the two royal clans must have meant that the basis of Duguwa power remained intact and that a great number of titles and offices were bestowed on members of both clans. Kingship itself was most likely open to the Sayfuwa and the Duguwa, even if up to the reign of Dunama Dibalemi only descendants of Hummay had ruled. Islam was widely accepted as the creed of the new age, but under the surface the Amun cult survived. By destroying the *mune* Dunama Dibalemi obviously wanted to abolish the remains of the old state religion of the Duguwa. However, he underestimated the overall significance of the "pagan idol" for the Chadic state and he had no idea how difficult it would be to overcome the resistance of the pagan priests. Indeed, the more radical Duguwa, in particular the Bulala, rose against the Sayfuwa and protracted warfare ensued.[44] In the end the internal enemies were vanquished, but it was only possible for the Sayfuwa to win back the support of the moderate Duguwa by making drastic concessions.[45]

III. From Kanem to Borno

The third major event in the history of the Central Sudan is the withdrawal of the Sayfuwa from Kanem during the reign of 'Umar b. Idrīs (1376-1381). According to the *Dīwān* the Sayfuwa surrendered at this time Njmi, their ancient seat of government, to the Bulala and fled to Kagha.[46] Since it is well-established that the Sayfuwa first ruled in Kanem and later in Borno, historians were eager to find out under which circumstances the royal court was moved from the east of Lake Chad to the west. By turning the Kagha province of Borno

44 Ibn Furtū candidly only mentions the rebellion of the Tubu without losing a word about its leadership which certainly consisted of Duguwa nobles, among whom the Bulala must have been prominent (Ibn Furtu, *K. gharawāt Kānim*, ed. Palmer, 1932: 99, 128, transl. Redhouse, 1862: 92, 122). Since the Tubu are already mentioned in connection with a ruler of the eleventh century (*Dīwān*, 1977: § 13) their ethnogenesis is not likely to be related to the Sayfuwa-Duguwa conflict.
45 Note that the Imam Ibn Furtū was certainly not willing to express any reservations he may have had concerning the historical legitimity of Sayfuwa rule.
46 *Dīwān*, 1977: § 32.

Who were the Bulala? It would appear that present-day traditions offer valuable supplementary elements for the answer to this question. Considering the dynastic lists of the Bulala we notice that in the earlier part they are nearly identical with those of the Sayfuwa.[35] This may be partly due to the fact that some elements have been borrowed from the Sayfuwa lists in recent times. Nevertheless it shows at least that the Bulala think of themselves as being close relatives of the Sayfuwa. Such a contention is supported by the similarity existing between the titles used in the Bulala kingdom of Fitri and those of pre-Kanemi Borno.[36] As for their language it should be noted that the Bulala speak at present the language of their Kuka subjects as well as Arabic[37], but this does not preclude the possibility that they earlier spoke a Kanembu dialect.

Looking at the Bulala traditions of origin we find that they claim the same Yemenite origin as the Sayfuwa. This may have led Barth to suspect that Jīl Shikomēni, the royal ancestor, was a son of Dunama Dibalemi.[38] A better explanation for the close relationship between the Bulala and the Sayfuwa is offered by a Kanembu oral tradition recorded at the beginning of this century by the Colonial officer Landeroin. In Mao, the capital of Kanem, he was told by court officials that the Bulala were residing in Kanem before the arrival of the Sayfuwa from Yemen.[39] This tradition is consistent with an etymology proposed by Palmer according to which the Bulala name is derived from Bulu, the penultimate of the pre-Islamic rulers of the Duguwa.[40] Whatever the origin of their name it can hardly be doubted that the Bulala were part of the Duguwa ruling elite. They may even have been priests of the *Mune*/Amun cult.[41] The connection with the Duguwa is no longer known to the Bulala. This is, however, not surprising since after their last defeat at the hands of the Sayfuwa and their final expulsion from Kanem towards the end of the sixteenth century,[42] a Sayfuwa origin must have appeared more attractive to them than the reference to a dynasty the name of which mainly survived in the Duguwa caste of low standing. The situation was different in the fourteenth century when the Bulala must have still prided themselves – as we will see later – on being descendants of the Zaghāwa. It is this early genealogical claim which would seem to establish most clearly that the present petty rulers of Fitri were indeed closely related to the first dynasty of Kanem.[43]

In the mid-thirteenth century the Bulala were forced to withdraw to the area of Lake Fitri where they subdued the Kuka. One century later, however, they rose against the

35 Carbou, 1912: 302; Hagenbucher, 1968: 51.
36 Hagenbucher, 1968: 54–56.
37 Carbou, 1912: 293.
38 Barth, 1857, II: 586.
39 Landeroin, 1911: 353; Nachtigal was told that the Bulala were related to the Duguwa (Danoa) (1879, II: 261.)
40 *Dīwān*, 1977: § 8; Palmer, 1936: 217. Bulu is likely to correspond to the Christian name Paul (Lange, 1977: 67 n. 1).
41 Further to the west a particular spirit of the Bori and Holley pantheons is still called Bulala. In traditions of origin this name is sometimes reinterpreted in Islamic terms as referring to Bilāl b. Rabāḥ, the *mu'adhdhin* of the Prophet Muhammad.
42 At the time of Ibn Furṭū (1578) the Sayfuwa ruler Idrīs Alauma tried to rule Kanem through the Bulala king Muhammad b. 'Abd Allāh (Zeltner, 1980: 107–188).
43 I earlier failed to understand that the Bulala were descendants of the Duguwa ruling establishment (Lange, 1982: 315–331).

Sayfuwa who had temporarily reestablished their rule over Kanem. They forced the descendants of Ḥummay to abandon their earlier central province, but frequent inroads organized by their enemies obliged them to be on their guards by centering their power on both, Kanem and the region beyond the Baḥr al-Ghazāl. Hence Ibn Furṭū could have the impression that the Bulala had originated from the area of Lake Fitri. This situation was still basically the same at the beginning of the sixteenth century when Leo Africanus called the Bulala kingdom by the name Gaoga, perhaps derived from its Kuka inhabitants.

With these developments in mind we may now interpret the *mune* incident in the light of its consequences, among which the Bulala ethnogenesis was the most detrimental for the Sayfuwa. First and foremost it would appear that Hummay and his men, after their rise to power, were prepared to share the advantages of high office with their Duguwa rivals. Practically, the coexistence of the two royal clans must have meant that the basis of Duguwa power remained intact and that a great number of titles and offices were bestowed on members of both clans. Kingship itself was most likely open to the Sayfuwa and the Duguwa, even if up to the reign of Dunama Dibalemi only descendants of Ḥummay had ruled. Islam was widely accepted as the creed of the new age, but under the surface the Amun cult survived. By destroying the *mune* Dunama Dibalemi obviously wanted to abolish the remains of the old state religion of the Duguwa. However, he underestimated the overall significance of the "pagan idol" for the Chadic state and he had no idea how difficult it would be to overcome the resistance of the pagan priests. Indeed, the more radical Duguwa, in particular the Bulala, rose against the Sayfuwa and protracted warfare ensued.[44] In the end the internal enemies were vanquished, but it was only possible for the Sayfuwa to win back the support of the moderate Duguwa by making drastic concessions.[45]

III. *From Kanem to Borno*

The third major event in the history of the Central Sudan is the withdrawal of the Sayfuwa from Kanem during the reign of 'Umar b. Idrīs (1376–1381). According to the *Dīwān* the Sayfuwa surrendered at this time Njmi, their ancient seat of government, to the Bulala and fled to Kagha.[46] Since it is well-established that the Sayfuwa first ruled in Kanem and later in Borno, historians were eager to find out under which circumstances the royal court was moved from the east of Lake Chad to the west. By turning the Kagha province of Borno

44 Ibn Furṭū candidly only mentions the rebellion of the Tubu without losing a word about its leadership which certainly consisted of Duguwa nobles, among whom the Bulala must have been prominent (Ibn Furṭu, *Kʿghazawāt Kānim*, ed. Palmer, 1932: 99, 128, transl. Redhouse, 1862: 92, 122). Since the Tubu are already mentioned in connection with a ruler of the eleventh century (*Dīwān*, 1977: § 13) their ethnogenesis is not likely to be related to the Sayfuwa-Duguwa conflict.
45 Note that the Imam Ibn Furṭu was certainly not willing to express any reservations he may have had concerning the historical legitimity of Sayfuwa rule.
46 *Dīwān*, 1977: § 32.

into a "place of refuge" the *Dīwān* provides a simple and plausible explanation which was consequently accepted at face value.[47]

From other sources we learn however that Borno had gained in importance over Kanem much earlier.[48] In the ninth century al-Ya'qūbī mentions the existence of hostile relations between Kanem and Mali, a remark which implies that both kingdoms were situated not too far from each other.[49] In the mid-thirteenth century the ruler of the Chadic state was called "king of Kanem, ruler (*ṣāhib*) of Borno".[50] In the mid-fourteenth century Ibn Baṭṭūṭa considered Idrīs (b. Nikale) to be the king of Borno.[51] About the same time the chancery records of Cairo list Kanem and Borno as two different kingdoms, the rulers of the first claiming descent from 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib.[52] These elements cast considerable doubt on the validity of the idea suggested by the *Dīwān* that the royal court of the Sayfuwa was shifted from Kanem to Borno during the reign of 'Umar b. Idrīs. It is certainly not correct that earlier the center of the Chadic state was permanently situated in Kanem.

On the contrary it would appear that the Sayfuwa were firmly established in Borno by the middle of the fourteenth century. It is from the area west of Lake Chad that they tried to extend once more their political influence to Kanem which had earlier been lost to their Duguwa rivals.[53] The information concerning the death of two rulers, 'Uthmān b. Dāwūd (1369–1373) and 'Uthmān b. Idrīs (1373–1375), in Njīmi – which may also apply to Idrīs b. Nikale (1335–1359)[54] – should therefore be considered as evidence that the Sayfuwa were campaigning in Kanem. As a matter of fact, fighting in Kanem had been resumed in consequence of the dynastic conflict which had arisen between Dāwūd b. Nikale (1359–1369) and the sons of his predecessor Idrīs b. Nikale.[55] Taking advantage of this situation the Bulala tried once more to win back the ruling position of their ancestors.[56] And indeed, with the help of the local population they were able to expel the Sayfuwa from their eastern province.[57]

Contemporary sources confirm the marginal position of Kanem within the empire of the Sayfuwa in the second half of the fourteenth century. Al-Qalqashandī reproduces a letter from the Sayfuwa ruler 'Uthmān b. Idrīs which was handed over by a Bornoan emissary to the Sultan of Egypt in 794 AH (1391–2). The letter is a note of protest against the depredations committed by nomadic Arabs in Borno. In spite of the fact that the Arabs

47 Barth (1857, II: 587), Palmer (1936: 217) and A. Smith (1971: 179) follow the *Dīwān* by suggesting a transfer of the royal capital. See also Urvoy, 1949: 54 (departure of various tribes); Trimingham, 1962: 120 (move to Kagha); Fisher, 1977: 291 (exodus); Zeltner, 1980: 65–66 (flight to Borno, an earlier temporary residence of the Sayfuwa); Lavers, 1980a: 192 (Borno a new home); Barkindo, 1984: 244–6 (migration to Borno); Cuoq, 1984: 250–251 (withdrawal to the small territory of Borno).
48 Lange, 1982: 315–331.
49 *K. al-ta'rīkh* part. transl. in Hopkins and Levtzion, 1981: 21.
50 Ibn Khaldūn, *K. al-'ibar*, part. transl. in: Hopkins and Levtzion, 1981: 337.
51 *Tuhfat al-nuzzār*, part. transl. in: Hopkins and Levtzion, 1981: 302.
52 Al-'Umarī, *al-Ta'rīf*, part. transl. in: Hopkins and Levtzion, 1981: 277–278.
53 Lange, 1982: 317–326.
54 *Dīwān*, 1977: §§ 26, 28, 29.
55 *Dīwān*, 1977: § 27.
56 Both the *Dīwān* (1977: § 27) and Ibn Furṭū (*K. ghazawāt Kānim*, ed. Palmer, 1932: 54; transl. Redhouse, 1862: 46) claim that the Bulala wars started during the reign of Dāwūd b. Nikale.
57 *Dīwān*, 1977: § 31.

must have come from the east the letter does not contain any reference to Kanem.[58] Furthermore, if really the Sayfuwa had been utterly defeated under 'Umar b. Idrīs they would, among other things, certainly not have been able to send a royal delegate shortly afterwards to Cairo.

Al-Maqrīzī provides information which proves that the idea of a refugee governement in Kagha must be rejected. According to his statement the inhabitants of Kanem had rebelled against the Sayfuwa, but Borno and twelve other kingdoms had remained faithful to them.[59] There is no reason to suppose that the Bornoan delegate, who is at the origin of both elements of information,[60] gave a totally distorted picture with respect of the political situation in the Lake Chad area since, on the other hand, he candidly admits the devastations committed by the Arabs "in the whole of Borno".[61]

Al-Maqrīzī further notes that the people of Borno as well as those of Kanem were called Zaghāy.[62] It can hardly be doubted that Zaghāy is a name derived from Zaghāwa. The curious resurgence of the Duguwa/Zaghāwa towards the end of the fourteenth century reminds us that not only the Bulala claimed descent from the first dynasty of Kanem but also the Sayfuwa, whose early chroniclers had inserted the names of their Duguwa predecessors into the official kinglist.[63] And in fact, it must be remembered that it is precisely this distortion of past realities which had given rise in the first place to the idea to produce a written document, such as the *Dīwān*, in order to prop up the spurious dynastic claim to a dual ancestry.[64] Now, the revival of the name Zaghāwa/Zaghāy at the end of the fourteenth century would seem to imply that the Sayfuwa had by this time accepted the genealogical prominence of the Duguwa, even if their claim of descent from Sayf b. Dhī Yazan was not fully discarded. In any case, it clearly shows that the ideological position of the Sayfuwa had been weakened, although it in no way supports the idea that the royal court had taken refuge in Kagha.

In the light of these elements it appears quite probable that the *Dīwān*, with respect to "the flight of the Sayfuwa from Njīmi to Kagha", reproduces the opinion of a late court historiān who tried to link the ethnogenesis of the Kanuri to the destiny of the Sayfuwa dynasty. If the name Kanuri is derived from Kanem, as suggested by Nachtigal, this etymology would support the idea of a migratory mouvement from east to west.[65] On the other hand the term Beriberi applied by Hausa speakers to the Sayfuwa (because of their Berber origin)[66] and their subjects also implies a close connection between the Kanuri and the Sayfuwa dynasty. All this still does not prove, however, that the chronist was correct in

58 Al-Qalqashandī, *Subh al-a'shā*, part. transl. in Hopkins and Levtzion, 1981: 347–8.
59 *Ajnās al-Sūdān*, part. transl. in Hopkins and Levtzion, 1981: 354; Lange, 1979: 208.
60 It is known that al-Maqrīzī was for some time a secretary in the chancellery; as such he was able to be present in audiences granted by the Sultan to foreign delegations (Garcin, 1977: 200; see also Lange, 1979: 208 n. 5).
61 Al-Qalqashandī, *Subh al-a'shā*, part. transl. in Hopkins and Levtzion, 1981: 347.
62 Lange, 1979: 207–9.
63 *Dīwān*, 1977: §§ 2–11.
64 Lange, 1977: 158.
65 Nachtigal, 1879, II: 418. It should also be noted that the Yoruba refer to the Kanuri as Kanikè (Lukas, 1937: 208).
66 Barth, 1857, II: 26.

suggesting that the Sayfuwa had fled "with all his people"[67], i.e. the Kanuri[68], at the time of 'Umar b. Idrīs from Kanem to Kagha. A far better candidate for the shift of the royal court from Kanem to Borno would appear to be Dunama Dibalemi (1203–1242).[69] He died in Zamtam, a locality situated to the west of Gazargamo, the later capital of Borno. It is for his successor Kaday (1242–1270) that Ibn Khaldūn mentions the exact title of the Chadic ruler: "king of Kanem, ruler (*ṣāhib*) of Borno". Kaday had most probably established his court in Borno, while claiming at the same time authority over Kanem. Since the Kanuri can be defined as the people of Borno the process of their ethnogenesis has begun in the thirteenth century.

It is only at a late period that Kagha rose to prominence. The actual position of Kagha can be established with a certain degree of confidence. In various forms the same name appears in the writings of Arabic authors. Ibn Sa'īd in the thirteenth century mentions the fertile land of Jāja which was apparently situated to the west of Lake Chad.[70] Towards the mid-fourteenth century al-'Umarī considers Kākā to be the most southern town of Kanem,[71] while al-Qalqashandī, quoting a statement of the royal Sayfuwa envoy, refers to it as the capital of Borno.[72] Among modern writers the most authoritive identification of Kagha has been provided by the knowledgeable travellor Heinrich Barth who located it in the area of the modern town of Maiduguri.[73] These various pieces of information show that Kagha was situated somewhere to the southwest of Lake Chad in a region partly inhabited by the Chadic speaking Sao.[74] If we further consider that the abandonment of the Kanem province did in fact not imply any major disruption in the history of the Chadic state we come to the conclusion that the royal court of the Sayfuwa must have been established in Kagha even before the reign of 'Umar b. Idrīs.

This line of thinking leads to the idea that Sa'īd, the next ruler of the Chadic state was a leading member of the royal court. He is the only ruler mentioned in the *Dīwān* who is given the title *malik* ("king") instead of the usual "sultan". Further, his name is not followed by the name of his father, a fact which is also quite exceptional for the chronicle.[75] On the basis of these elements Barth suggested that Sa'īd was an usurper.[76] But considering that Sa'īd was the first king to rule after the defeat of the Sayfuwa in Kanem it would appear to be more plausible that he was a non-royal offical of the Sayfuwa court – perhaps precisely the Digma – who, in the absence of any legitimate ruler, had temporarily assumed power in the name of the Sayfuwa dynasty.[77]

67 *Dīwān*, 1977: § 31.
68 The Kanuri name is first mentioned in the eighteenth century by the Fulani scholar Ṭāhir b. Ibrāhim (Bello, *Infāq al-maysūr*, transl. Hodgkin 1975: 209).
69 Lange, 1982: 321.
70 *K. al-jughrāfiyyā*, part. transl. in: Hopkins and Levtzion, 1981: 187–188.
71 *Masālik al-abṣār*, part. transl. in: Hopkins and Levtzion, 1981: 260.
72 *Ṣubḥ al-a'shā*, part. transl. in: Hopkins and Levtzion, 1981: 344.
73 Barth, 1857, II: 587.
74 Lange, 1989: 203–210. Connah looks for Kagha in the central *firki* lands close to Lake Chad (1981: 225). It should be further noted that Kagâ is also the Tubu name given to the Kanuri of Kanem (Carbou, 1912: 26 n. 4, 298).
75 *Dīwān*, 1977: § 32.
76 Barth, 1857, II: 587.
77 Cf. Lange, 1989: 208.

IV. Al Gaji and the Foundation of Gazargamo

The fourth event under discussion is the foundation of Gazargamo, the first permanent and undisputed capital of the Sayfuwa since the days of Dunama Dibalemi (1203–1242). According to Ibn Furṭū and to local oral traditions it was 'Alī Gaji (1455–1487) who built the town.[78] This is confirmed by the *Dīwān* which first mentions Gazargamo as the burial place of 'Alī Gaji. Located at a site near the confluence of the Komadugu Yobe with the Kamadugu Gana the new capital was in a better position than Kagha with respect to the trans-Saharan trade.[80] From here it was also easier to reach other towns of the Sahel, especially the Hausa cities.

'Alī Gaji inaugurated a new period in the history of the Chadic state, but he did not lay the foundations of the Borno empire. More than a century earlier Idrīs b. Nikale was already a powerful king of Borno even if his court was established in the southern part of the country. During their long stay in Kagha the Sayfuwa were exposed to the Sao culture. It is here that the Kanuri adopted the legends of the Sao giants which they later spread to all other areas where they settled, including the Saharan oasis.

Oral traditions of the Komadugu area claim that prior to the coming of the Sayfuwa the site of Gazargamo was inhabited by Sao people with a chief called Sao Dala Ngəmami.[81] If we are to believe these accounts the chief helped the newcomers build their capital, but later his people were eliminated by trickery. Although even Ibn Furṭū uses the name Sao-Gafata to refer to the local inhabitants of the Komadugu area it would appear that the original Sao were living in the *furki* region south of Lake Chad, which included the eastern districts of Kagha. The specific name given to the Chadic speaking inhabitants of these districts was Ngəma. According to one possible etymology the name Gazargamo contains the Arabic *qaṣr* (stronghold) and the ethnonym Ngəma.[82] The same tribal name seems to be included in Sao Dala Ngəmami which may be analysed as "Sao Dala" – meaning perhaps the "urban Sao" – of "Ngəma origin". On the basis of these etymologies one might be tempted to believe that the Ngəma, who are today considered to be part of the Kanuri, contributed to a large extent to the building of Gazargamo.[83] However, it can more plausibly be argued that the tradition of Sao Dala Ngəmami has been been transfered en bloc from the original Sao country in the *firki* region to the area of Gazargamo.[84] Indeed, in Kawar the same story of Sao Dala Ngəmami is told, although the pre-Kanuri inhabitants of the oasis are likely to have been Berbers.[85]

78 Ibn Furṭū makes an explicit statement to this effect (1987: 36); in the *Dīwān* Gazargamo is first mentioned as the burial place of 'Alī Gaji (§ 48).
79 *Dīwān*, 1977: § 48.
80 Lange, 1987: 114–117.
81 Palmer, 1936, II: 64–68.
82 It can be objected to this etymology that the *Dīwān* has the spelling Ghazr-, not Qasr- as one could have expected if really the name was derived from the Arabic.
83 Lange, 1989: 205.
84 We entirely lack a survey of the Sao-traditions of the *firki*-lands. With respect to Sao Dala Ngəmami Lebeuf and Masson Detourbet, who mainly have in view the Sao-traditions of the Kotoko, reproduce the version provided by Palmer (1950: 31–33).
85 Le Sourd, 1946: 5. The archaeologist H. Ziegert discovered that the Kanuri conquered Jado in the fifteenth century. Prior to this date the inhabitants were Berbers (in George, 1992: 176).

On the whole it would appear to be etymologically more correct to link Ghazr to the Ethnonym Ngazar which is today applied to a specific group of Kanuri-speaking people living in southwestern Borno and who have their own king.[86] Both designations, Ghazr and Ngazar, are perhaps also connected with the name Kisra, which is used by Arabic authors to refer to the Sassanids. In the Central Sudan the idea of a Kisra origin was most likely put forward by the Duguwa – on the basis of earlier oral traditions pointing to the Nile valley – in order to fight the Sayfuwa by belittling the importance of their Yemenite origin.[87] That indeed Gazargamo harboured the main components of the Bornoan society is supported by local oral traditions which claim the city of 'Alī Gaji to be inhabited by Magumi Sayfuwa and Magumi Duguwa.[88]

Gazargamo was also the starting point of the great Bornoan expansion during the second half of the fifteenth century. It would be out of place to develop this subject here any further. Suffice that it was not by vanquishing his internal enemies that 'Alī Gaji was able to extend the political influence of Borno far to the west, but by concious efforts of reconciliation. His tolerant approach towards earlier adversaries of the Sayfuwa comprised both, dynastic groups and religious minorities. As a consequence the majority of the Duguwa nobles of Hausaland became his supporters and allies.[89]

As a matter of fact some neighbouring people have preserved the memory of the Bornoan expansion by recalling either Gazargamo or 'Alī Gaji. The rulers of Kutus, north of Munio, trace their origin back to *Maī* Cillum Awami of Birni Gassalambo (Gazargamo). In the far west of Hausaland the rulers of Arewa claim decent from Ari, son of Kalumbu. two names in which we may recognize a reference to 'Alī Gaji and Gazargamo.[90] The name Arewa itself, which in Hausa later took on the meaning "north", stands for "the people of 'Alī > Ali > Ari". It is only on the basis of such elements of local traditions that we can hope to get an idea of the great Borno expansion which took place under the leadership of 'Alī Gaji.[91]

In conclusion it may be said that the foundation of the Chadic state antedates the emergence of recognizable ethnic groups in the Central Sudan for several centuries. As far as we can see there was no single ethnic substratum on which Kanem was founded. It has been shown that the territorial base of the state underwent in the course of history more complex changes than is implied by the double name Kanem-Borno. The Bulala and the Sayfuwa Magumi are two examples for the numerous descent groups which emerged as a consequence of the competition for power. The Bulala became a distinct ethnic group, while the Sayfuwa Magumi are today part of the Kanuri. Other ethnic groups, like the Tubu, the Sao and, among the latter, the Ngama, were originally distinct from the Kanembu/Kanuri, but became progressively assimilated to them. With the failure of the Chadic state to maintain its authority over Kanem and the surrounding areas, the Tubu reverted to their former independance.

86 The second part of the name, *-kamu* is also found in *komadugu*, one of the Kanuri terms for "river"

87 Lange, 1993a (in press). To this etymology it can also be objected that if *Gazr-* stands for Kisra, why then was the name of the capital not written accordingly?

88 Fieldnotes, 7/1977.

89 Lange, 1993a (in press). Historians tend to consider 'Alī Gaji as a powerful military leader (Barth, 1857, II: 588-590; A. Smith, 1971: 181-183) and founder of the Borno Caliphate (Palmer, 1936: 222-225; Trimingham, 1962, 121-122; Lavers, 1980a: 192-194; Barkindo, 1984: 246-249).

90 Landeroin, 1911: 494; Zakari, 1985: 189.

91 Lange, 1993a (in press).

Many more people of the Central Sudan can be traced to dynastic descent groups of the Chadic state. This is true for the Zaghāwa, the Afuno (Kano people)[92] and other Hausa groups and the Bariba (Beriberi)[93] as well as for smaller people such as the Ngazar, the Dagəra, the Ngizim, the Bedde, the Bolewa, the Achifawa and many others.[94] The Kanuri themselves, now considered to be the carriers of the Chadic state, only emerged after the foundation of Borno in the thirteenth century. It is not yet established whether they are entirely identical with the Beriberi of Hausa parlance. If they were it would be correct to consider them as the "people of the Sayfuwa" in contrast to the "people of the Duguwa". To the latter belong the Bulala, the Ngazar, the Dagəra, the Bolewa, the Ngizim, the Bedde, as well as most of the individual Hausa peoples. Other descendants of the once ruling Duguwa are today part of the Kanembu society as members of the Dugu caste of blacksmiths.

The Kanuri are of an heterogeneous origin, as reflected by their traditions: on one hand they have incorporated the fictitious Yemenite tradition of origin of the Sayfuwa and the idea of an original home in Kanem; on the other they have also adopted the more popular Sao-traditions of the people of the *firki* plains south of Lake Chad who had come under the sway of the Kanembu. Therefore, the Kanuri can be seen as immigrants from Kanem, who developed their own identity as people of the Borno state. According to this definition there were no Kanuri during the period when the main Chadic state was centered on Kanem. The inhabitants of the Kanem empire may be called Kanembu, but one should keep in mind that the leading Magumi and Dalatoa sections of the present-day Kanembu came from Borno and that they are therefore of Kanuri origin.

In the end it would appear that traditions of origin and ethnonyms – when properly analysed – are better guides for historians than conclusions drawn from the present-day ethno-linguistic situations. Thus, in spite of their close linguistic parentage the Kanuri must be distinguished from the Kanembu, but the Kanuri-speaking Ngazar and the Chadic-speaking Ngizim should be considered historically related. The same holds true for the Kanembu-speaking Bedde and Ngijem/Guiyim and the Chadic-speaking Bedde and Ngizim.[95] These groups are related through their common Duguwa parentage in spite of their present linguistic differences. Therefore, if many people in the neighbourhood of Borno pretend in our days to the same origin as the powerful Kanuri these claims should not automatically be discarded as being merely expressions of intellectual snobism. In fact, the gap between the history as it is seen by the people themselves and the history as it really

92 Lavers, 1980b: 117-118. Afuno would appear to derive from Funé, the name of the first historical ruler of the Duguwa (*Diwān*, § 4).

93 Lange, 1993a (in press)

94 Lange, 1993a (in press)

95 On the Ngijem/Guiyim (Ngidsehem) and the Bedde of Kanem see Nachtigal, 1879, II: 331-332). Another group of Ngijim is dominated by the Bulala of Lake Fitri (Hagenbucher, 1968: 54). Among the regalia of Kanem-Borno the 'Ngiji' which was a silver orb should be noted. It was held either by the Mai or by a royal singer called Ngijima (Palmer 1936, 11)

was is much smaller than was hitherto supposed on the basis of an excessive reliance on concepts establishing ethnic differences.

Bibliography

Adams, W. Y., 1977: *Nubia, Corridor to Africa*, London
Barth, H., 1857–59: *Travels and Discoveries in North and Central Africa in the Years 1849–1855*, 3 vols., New York.
Camps, G., 1980: *Berbères aux marges de l'histoire*, Toulouse.
Carbou, H., 1912: *La région du Tchad et du Ouadaï*, Paris.
Connah, G., 1981: *Three Thousand Years in Africa*, Cambridge.
Conte, E., 1983: *Marriage Patterns, Political Change and the Perpetuation of Social Inequality [in South Kanem (Chad)]*, Paris.
Cuoq, J., 1984: *Histoire de l'islamisation de l'Afrique de l'ouest*, Paris.
Dīwān, 1977: *in*: Lange, D., 1977: *Le Dīwān des sultans du [Kānem-] Bornū: Chronologie et histoire d'un royaume africain*, Wiesbaden.
Épaulard, A., 1956: *Jean-Léon l'Africain. Description de l'Afrique*, Paris.
Garcin, J.-Cl., 1977: "Al-Maqrīzī", *in*: Ch.-A. Julien *et al.* eds., *Les Africains*, vol. IX, Paris, 197–223
George, U., 1992: "Die Zitadelle der vergessenen Christen", *Geo* (Hamburg), 9, 156–182
Greenberg, J., 1966: *The Languages of Africa*, Bloomington.
Hagenbucher, F., 1968: "Notes sur les Bilala du Fitri", *Cahiers de l'ORSTOM*, sér. Sci. hum., 5, 37–69.
Hallam, R., 1987: "Towards a re-assessment of the early Kanem mais", *Annals of Borno*, 4, 33–46
Hiskett, M., 1984: *The Development of Islam in West Africa*, London.
Hodgkin, Th., 1975: *Nigerian Perspectives: An Historical Anthology*, 2nd ed., London.
Hofmann, I., 1981: *Material für eine meroitische Grammatik*, Wien.
Hopkins, J. and N. Levtzion, 1981: *Corpus of early Arabic sources for West Africa*, Cambridge
Houtsma, M. Th. *et al.* (eds.), 1913–1938: *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 8 vols., Leiden.
Ibn Furtū, 1987: *The Borno Expeditions of Idrīs Alauma (1564–1576)*, ed. D. Lange, Wiesbaden.
Landeroin, M. A., 1911: "Du Tchad au Niger. Notice historique", *in*: J. Tilho, ed., *Documents scientifiques de la Mission Tilho (1906–1909)*, vol. 2, Paris, 309–537.
Lange, D., 1977: *Le Dīwān des sultans du [Kānem-] Bornū: Chronologie et histoire d'un royaume africain*, Wiesbaden.
–, 1978: "Progrès de l'Islam et changement politique au Kānem du XI[e] au XIII[e] siècle", *Journal of African History*, XIX, 4 (1978), 495–513.
–, 1979: "Un texte de Maqrīzī sur 'les races des Sūdān'", *Annales Islamologiques*, 15, 196–209.
–, 1982: "L'éviction des Sēfuwa du Kānem et l'origine des Bulāla", *Journal of African History*, 23, 3. 315–331.
–, 1987: *A Sudanic Chronicle: The Borno Expeditions of Idrīs Alauma (1564–1576) according to the account of Ahmad b. Furtū*, Wiesbaden.
–, 1988: "The Chad region as a crossroads", *in*: Dj. T. Niane, ed. *General History of Africa, III*, Paris, UNESCO, 436–460.
–, 1989: "Préliminaires pour une histoire des Sao", *Journal of African History*, 30, 189–210.
–, 1991: "Les rois de Gao-Sané et les Almoravides", *Journal of African History*, 32, 251–275.
–, 1992: "Das alte Mali und Ghana: Der Beitrag der Oraltraditionen zur Kritik einer historiographischen Fiktion", *Historische Zeitschrift*, 255, 3, 585–623.
–, 1993a: "Die Hausa-Traditionen in ihrer Abhängigkeit von Kanem-Borno und Nubien", *Anthropos*, 88, 1 *(in press)*.
–, 1993b: "The Almoravids and the Islamization of the Great States of West Africa", *Mélanges Claude Cahen* (forthcoming).
Lange, D. and S. Berthoud, 1977: "*Al-Qaṣaba* et d'autres villes de la route centrale du Sahara", *Paideuma* 23, 19–40.
Lavers, J., 1980a: "Kanem and Borno to 1808", in: O. Ikeme, ed., *Groundwork in Nigerian History*, Ibadan, 187–209.
–, 1980b: "A note on the terms 'Hausa' and 'Afuno'", *Kano Studies*, 2, 1, 113–120.

–, 1982: "Dating the rulers of Kanem-Bornu", *Journal of African History*, 23, 122–123 (review of my *Dīwān*)
Lebeuf, J.-P. and A. Masson Detourbet, 1950: *Les civilisations du Tchad*, Paris
Le Sourd, M., 1946: "Tarikh el Kawar", *Bulletin de l'IFAN*, 8, 1–54
Nachtigal, G., 1879–1889: *Sahara und Sudan*, 3 vols., Berlin, Leipzig
Nicolaï, R., 1984: *Préliminaires a une étude sur l'origine du songhay*, Berlin
Nur Alkali, M., 1983: "Economic factors in the history of Borno under the Sayfuwa", in: Y. B. Usman/ M. Nur Alkali, eds., *Studies in the History of Borno*, Zaria, 57–77
Palmer, H. R., 1932: ed. *Hādhā al-kitāb huwa min sha'n sultān Idrīs Alawma wa-mā waqa'a baynahu wa-bayna umarā' bilād Kānim*, Kano
–, 1928: *Sudanese Memoirs*, 3 vols., Lagos.
–, 1936: *Bornu Sahara und Sudan*, London
Qur'ān, various editions and translations
Redhouse, J. W., 1862: "Translation of seven expeditions in the land of Kānim ", *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 19 (1862), 43–123
Smith, A., 1971: "The early states of the Central Sudan", *in*: J. Ajayi and M. Crowder, eds., *History of West Africa*, first ed. London, 158–201
Török, L., 1986: *Der meroitische Staat 1. Untersuchungen und Urkunden zur Geschichte des Sudan im Altertum*, Meroitica 9, Berlin
Török, L., 1988: "Geschichte Meroes. Ein Beitrag über die Quellenlage und den Forschungsstand", *in*: H. Temporini, ed., *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt. Teil II. Principat. Bd. 10.1*, Berlin, New York, 107–341
Urvoy, Y., 1949: *Histoire de l'Empire du Bornou*, Paris.
Zakari, M., 1985: Contribution a l'histoire des populations du sud-est nigerien, Niamey
Zeltner, J.-C., 1980: *Pages d'histoire du Kanem*, Paris

was is much smaller than was hitherto supposed on the basis of an excessive reliance on concepts establishing ethnic differences.

Bibliography

Adams, W. Y., 1977: *Nubia, Corridor to Africa*, London.
Barth, H., 1857–59: *Travels and Discoveries in North and Central Africa in the Years 1849–1855*, 3 vols., New York.
Camps, G., 1980: *Berbères aux marges de l'histoire*, Toulouse.
Carbou, H., 1912: *La région du Tchad et du Ouadaï*, Paris.
Connah, G., 1981: *Three Thousand Years in Africa*, Cambridge.
Conte, E., 1983: *Mariage Patterns, Political Change and the Perpetuation of Social Inequality [in South Kanem (Chad)]*, Paris.
Cuoq, J., 1984: *Histoire de l'islamisation de l'Afrique de l'ouest*, Paris.
Dīwān, 1977: *in*: Lange, D., 1977: *Le Dīwān des sultans du [Kānem-] Bornū: Chronologie et histoire d'un royaume africain*, Wiesbaden.
Épaulard, A., 1956: *Jean-Léon l'Africain: Description de l'Afrique*, Paris.
Garcin, J.-Cl., 1977: "Al-Maqrīzī", *in*: Ch.-A. Julien *et al.* eds., *Les Africains*, vol. IX, Paris, 197–223.
George, U., 1992: "Die Zitadelle der vergessenen Christen", *Geo* (Hamburg), 9, 156–182.
Greenberg, J., 1966: *The Languages of Africa*, Bloomington.
Hagenbucher, F., 1968: "Notes sur les Bilala du Fitri", *Cahiers de l'ORSTOM, sér.* Sci. hum., 5, 37–69.
Hallam, R., 1987: "Towards a re-assessment of the early Kanem mais", *Annals of Borno*, 4, 33–46.
Hiskett, M., 1984: *The Development of Islam in West Africa*, London.
Hodgkin, Th., 1975: *Nigerian Perspectives: An Historical Anthology*, 2nd ed., London.
Hofmann, I., 1981: *Material für eine meroitische Grammatik*, Wien.
Hopkins, J. and N. Levtzion, 1981: *Corpus of early Arabic sources for West Africa*, Cambridge.
Houtsma, M. Th. *et al.* (eds.), 1913–1938: *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 8 vols., Leiden.
Ibn Furṭū, 1987: *The Borno Expeditions of Idrīs Alauma (1564–1576)*, ed. D. Lange, Wiesbaden.
Landeroin, M. A., 1911: "Du Tchad au Niger. Notice historique", *in*: J. Tilho, ed., *Documents scientifiques de la Mission Tilho (1906–1909)*, vol. 2, Paris, 309–537.
Lange, D., 1977: *Le Dīwān des sultans du [Kānem-] Bornū: Chronologie et histoire d'un royaume africain*, Wiesbaden.
–, 1978: "Progrès de l'Islam et changement politique au Kānem du XI[e] au XIII[e] siècle", *Journal of African History*, XIX, 4 (1978), 495–513.
–, 1979: "Un texte de Maqrīzī sur 'les races des Sūdān'", *Annales Islamologiques*, 15, 196–209.
–, 1982: "L'éviction des Sēfuwa du Kānem et l'origine des Bulāla", *Journal of African History*, 23, 3, 315–331.
–, 1987: *A Sudanic Chronicle: The Borno Expeditions of Idrīs Alauma (1564–1576) according to the account of Aḥmad b. Furṭū*, Wiesbaden.
–, 1988: "The Chad region as a crossroads", *in*: Dj. T. Niane, ed. *General History of Africa, III*, Paris, UNESCO, 436–460.
–, 1989: "Préliminaires pour une histoire des Sao", *Journal of African History*, 30, 189–210.
–, 1991: "Les rois de Gao-Sané et les Almoravides", *Journal of African History*, 32, 251–275.
–, 1992: "Das alte Mali und Ghana: Der Beitrag der Oraltraditionen zur Kritik einer historiographischen Fiktion", *Historische Zeitschrift*, 255, 3, 585–623.
–, 1993a: "Die Hausa-Traditionen in ihrer Abhängigkeit von Kanem-Borno und Nubien", *Anthropos*, 88, 1 (in press).
–, 1993b: "The Almoravids and the Islamization of the Great States of West Africa", *Mélanges Claude Cahen* (forthcoming).
Lange, D. and S. Berthoud, 1977: "*Al-Qaṣaba* et d'autres villes de la route centrale du Sahara", *Paideuma* 23, 19–40.
Lavers, J., 1980a: "Kanem and Borno to 1808", in: O. Ikeme, ed., *Groundwork in Nigerian History*, Ibadan, 187–209.
–, 1980b: "A note on the terms 'Hausa' and 'Afuno'", *Kano Studies*, 2, 1, 113–120.

–, 1982: "Dating the rulers of Kanem-Bornu", *Journal of African History*, 23, 122–123 (review of my *Dīwān*).
Lebeuf, J.-P. and A. Masson Detourbet, 1950: *Les civilisations du Tchad*, Paris.
Le Sourd, M., 1946: "Tarikh el Kawar", *Bulletin de l'IFAN*, 8, 1–54.
Nachtigal, G., 1879–1889: *Sahara und Sudan*, 3 vols., Berlin, Leipzig.
Nicolaï, R., 1984: *Préliminaires à une étude sur l'origine du songhay*, Berlin.
Nur Alkali, M., 1983: "Economic factors in the history of Borno under the Sayfuwa", in: Y. B. Usman/ M. Nur Alkali, eds., *Studies in the History of Borno*, Zaria, 57–77.
Palmer, H. R., 1932: ed. *Hādhā al-kitāb huwa min sha'n sulṭān Idrīs Alawma wa-mā waqa'a baynahu wa-bayna umarā' bilād Kānim*, Kano.
–, 1928: *Sudanese Memoirs*, 3 vols., Lagos.
–, 1936: *Bornu Sahara und Sudan*, London.
Qur'ān, various editions and translations.
Redhouse, J. W., 1862: "Translation of ... seven expeditions in the land of Kānim ...", *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 19 (1862), 43–123.
Smith, A., 1971: "The early states of the Central Sudan", *in*: J. Ajayi and M. Crowder, eds., *History of West Africa*, first ed. London, 158–201.
Török, L., 1986: *Der meroitische Staat 1. Untersuchungen und Urkunden zur Geschichte des Sudan im Altertum*, Meroitica 9, Berlin.
Török, L., 1988: "Geschichte Meroes. Ein Beitrag über die Quellenlage und den Forschungsstand", in: H. Temporini, ed., *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt. Teil II. Principat. Bd. 10.1*, Berlin, New York, 107–341.
Urvoy, Y., 1949: *Histoire de l'Empire du Bornou*, Paris.
Zakari, M., 1985: Contribution a l'histoire des populations du sud-est nigerien, Niamey.
Zeltner, J.-C., 1980: *Pages d'histoire du Kanem*, Paris.

The Evolution of the Hausa Story: From Bawo to Bayajidda*

by Dierk Lange

According to widespread consensus the early history of the Hausa states rests on two main sources: the Arabic chronicle of the kings of Kano and the oral account of the Hausa *bakwai* or 'Hausa seven'. Historians are inclined to give considerable weight to the Kano Chronicle because it is a written source, while they tend to disregard the story of the 'Hausa seven', because of its oral transmission. In spite of their heavy reliance on the Kano Chronicle, it is only recently that they have begun to probe the validity of the information contained in the early parts of the Chronicle. Murray Last, who studied the Kano Chronicle for many years, came to the conclusion that its first written version was drawn up towards the middle of the seventeenth century[1] and that one of its main purposes was to foster the claim of Kutumbi (c. 1623–1648) and his successors to establish a Kano Caliphate[2].

In comparison, the story of the 'Hausa seven' has received much less attention from historians, despite its wide circulation among the Hausa people[3]. Recent changes in the content of the story have not received the attention they perhaps deserve. It is argued here that these changes reveal the basic message of the story and are therefore extremely significant. Further, it has not been recognized that by the time the history of Kano was first committed to writing, the story of the 'Hausa seven' was already well-known in Kano and certainly in other parts of Hausaland. Missing this important point, M. Last comes to the erroneous conclusion, that the story of the 'Hausa seven' was only developed in the eighteenth century by transforming "an originally seventeenth century claim to a Caliphate [. . .] into a historical myth which recognizes the primacy of the Borno Caliphate over the region."[4] Indeed there are good reasons to believe that the Kano Chronicle was first conceived in an attempt to react against the recognition of "the primacy of the Borno Caliphate" and not in order to establish the formal claim to a new Caliphate. But the authors of the Kano Chronicle were unable to suppress the message of the Hausa story – only the modern exegetes could be duped. Among the people of Hausaland it was towards the middle of the nineteenth century, some time after the rise of the Sokoto Caliphate,

that a modified version of the Hausa story brought about a change of perspective: Bawo and the prominence given to the Borno connection began to be overshadowed by Bayajidda and his connections with the Middle East.

The earliest reference to the story of the 'Hausa seven' is given inadvertently by the author of the Kano Chronicle himself: either the town of Katsina or Kutumbi (c. 1623–1648), the ruler of Kano, — the text is not clear — are said to have been very powerful "among the Hausa *bakwai*"[5].

An external source gives further support to the assumption that by the seventeenth century the Hausa story was widely known. On the basis of information collected in the second half of the seventeenth century in Egypt, the Turkish author Evliyā Çelebī mentions in his Travel-book that "there were seven tribes of Afnū (Hausa)"[6]. Since Evliyā Çelebī obtained very little information concerning the Central Sudan, the fact that he mentions the existence of seven Hausa "tribes" at all shows that this information was particularly important for his informant.

In the Kano Chronicle the 'Hausa seven' are mentioned again in two passages relating to eighteenth century kings. The mother of Muḥammad Shārēfa (c. 1703–1731) is said to have been outstanding: "No woman like her is found in the Hausa *bakwai*"[7]. The reign of Yāji b. Dādi (c. 1753–1768) is described as having been peaceful in the following terms:

> "In the time of Yāji there was no strive in this country, east and west, south and north. Everything was peaceful. Since the beginning of his reign he did not go forth for any military expedition. The relations between him and his brothers, the children of Bawo, all of them, became peaceful"[8].

It may be deduced from this passage that by the mid-eighteenth century there existed in Kano a strong tradition of the Hausa *bakwai*. According to this tradition the rulers of the seven Hausa kingdoms were considered to be brothers because they were the supposed descendants of Bawo. Apparently the tradition was considered to be historically valid since the author of this part of the chronicle seems to share the belief that the kings of the Hausa *bakwai* were related by strong family ties.

A more explicit reference to the story of the 'Hausa seven' appears in Muḥammad Bello's *Infāq al-maysūr*. The author begins his description of Hausaland with the following, rather surprising statement:

> "[The Hausa states] are inhabited by Sūdāniyyūn who are slaves *(mamālik)* of the Barbar [= Sayfuwa] of the people of Borno, as well as Fellāta and Tuareg"[9].

He then continues by providing the following explanation basing himself apparently on information derived from oral traditions current among the Hausa people:

> "They claim that a slave of the Sultan of Borno called Bawo was the progenitor of the Sūdāniyyūn among the people of this land. Hence we said that they are slaves of the Barbar of the people of Borno"[10].

There follows a more detailed account of the Hausa story according to which the people of Gobir did not belong to the Hausa *bakwai*. It is probably in order to establish this critical point that Bello finds it necessary to mention the name of his informant, Muḥammad al-Bāqirī, who was the Sultan of Agadez:

> "The Commander of the Faithful, my brother Muḥammad al-Bāqirī, son of the Sultan Muḥammad al-'Ādil, told me that Katsina, Kano, Zegzeg, Daura, Rano and Biram are all of the progeny of Bawo who was a slave of the Sultan of Borno. As for the people of Gobir, they are free in origin"[11].

Some fifteen years later another scholar, 'Abd al-Qādir b. al-Muṣṭafā, one of the leading personalities of the Sokoto Caliphate, gives in his *Rawdāt al-afkār* some more information on the 'Hausa seven'. In doing so he apparently intended to correct the simplifying statement of his predecessor according to which all of the Sudanic people of the Hausa states were slaves of the Sayfuwa (or the Beriberi). Having first made clear that the Hausa *bakwai* had to be distinguished from the *banza bakwai* (the "illegitimate" or "worthless" seven) he gives the following account of the Hausa story:

> "These regions were formerly in the possession of the Sultan of Borno. He had a slave called Bawo, of whose origin I know nothing, nor have I heard his tribe mentioned by anyone. The Sultan of Borno set him over these regions and he took charge of them. He had seven children and when he was near to death he set

each one of them over one of these lands. It is said that the one he set over Daura was a female whom he put in charge of this place. Daura was her name and hence the land was named after her. She was the eldest of his children and was the full sister of the Emir of Katsina. The Emir of Kano and the Emir of Gobir are sons of one mother. The Emir of Biram and the Emir of Zegzeg are sons of another mother, while the Emir of Narū [=Rano] is the only son of his mother".[12]

The following passage can best be understood in connection with the earlier statement of Muḥammad Bello according to which the Sudanic people of the Hausa states were slaves of the Sayfuwa (or the Beriberi):

"Dominion over these seven lands remained in the hands of the descendants of the children of the afore-mentioned Bawo. It is for this reason that it is said that all the people of these lands are slaves of the Sultan of Borno, meaning by that their sultans, since the people of these lands were under their rule".[13]

'Abd al-Qādir goes on trying to describe the exact nature of the relations which formerly existed between the Hausa *bakwai* and Borno. He apparently builds on the available oral tradition of his time:

"These sultans used to pay tribute and levies in kind to the sultans of Borno. They would send these to the Emir of Daura who would send them on to the Emir of Borno. This was a practice of theirs which they did not abandon until the beginning of this *jihād*".[14]

Even if 'Abd al-Qādir's account of the Hausa story contains more details than those given by the authors of the Kano Chronicle and Muḥammad Bello it is still a summary with many omissions. However, his clear statement that nothing was known concerning the origin of Bawo seems to exclude any omission of relevant information relating to the ancestry of this semi-mythological figure which was the cornerstone of the Hausa story.

In the middle of the nineteenth century Heinrich Barth also heard of the Hausa story. His account of it confirms the validity of the information provided by 'Abd al-Qādir, but there are also variations and possible additions. The mythical genealogy collected by Barth presents Bawo as the grandson of Biram and the son of Karbagari (in

Hausa: "seizer of the town"). His list of the Hausa *bakwai* is identical with the list given by 'Abd al-Qādir, although Barth makes no reservations concerning the status of Gobir. According to Barth all the children of Bawo had the same mother who belonged to the Dagera — a section of the Kanuri and not a Berber tribe as Barth believed. Some prominence is given to Biram as the grandfather of Bawo, and to Daura as his eldest child. Among the descendants of Bawo, Barth's version of the Hausa story distinguishes between three pairs of twins: Katsina and Zegzeg, Kano and Rano, Gobir and Daura[15]. These differ from the pairs mentioned by 'Abd al-Qādir.

Incidentally Barth provides some further information on the town of Daura in his German edition which does not figure in the English version:

"Daura seems to have been the center of the old pagan cult. It is said that the *"dodō"*, the principal god of the pagan cult, was slain here. Until the present time the inhabitants of Daura show an old mystical well which is said to be always dry after sunset".[16]

In spite of the rather detailed account of the Hausa story, Barth does not mention Bayajidda, the queen of Daura or the snake who all figure prominently in the expanded version. However, the basic elements of the story are there and it would seem that by the middle of the nineteenth century we are close to the time when the Hausa story could be changed into the Bayajidda legend.

Early in the twentieth century, A. Mischlich collected in Kete-Kratchi (German Togo) a version of the Hausa story which goes back to an informant of Katsina who died in 1894. According to this version the ancestors of the Hausa people were two Arabs who settled in the area of Gabi, later called Daura. One of the Arabs had a daughter called Daura who became the wife of an unnamed stablemaster *(murima)* from Borno[17]. The stablemaster was obliged to flee from Borno because he had betrayed his royal master. Daura gave birth to a son called Bawo. Soon after the birth of Bawo the Sultan of Borno died and his successor asked the stablemaster to return to Borno. The latter wanted to take the child with him but Daura refused. Later Bawo became the father of six male children: Gabi, Katsina, Auyo, Kano, Gobir and Rano[18]. In this version the Borno connection is clearly acknowledged, but instead of being the Sultan's representative Bawo becomes a refugee.

At about the same time, Landeroin was told a different version of the Hausa story also by an informant who came from Katsina. The ancestor of the inhabitants of Katsina was, according to this version, a man from Bagadaza (Baghdad) whose name was unknown. The man left Bagadaza and after a long journey arrived at the town of Daura. The town was ruled by a queen who was also called Daura. When the man from Bagadaza wanted to water his horse he was told that the people of Daura could only draw water on Fridays because the well was inhabited by a mysterious being[19]. Having climbed into the well he found that this being was a monstrous snake. He killed the snake and henceforth the inhabitants of Daura could draw water whenever they wanted. As a recompense he married the elderly queen of Daura and together with her a young woman. The young woman soon gave birth to a boy called Karbagari ("seizer of the town") and later the queen of Daura herself gave birth to a son called Bawo who is supposed to have been the father of the historical Muḥammad Korau[20]. This version of the Hausa story contains no reference at all to the Borno connection; it establishes instead a clear link with the Arabic world.

The same tendency is apparent from a footnote inserted in some copies of the Kano Chronicle:

> "Bagauda is the son of Bawo, the son of Bayajidda who descends from Ḥām b. Nūḥ. It is by reason of this origin that Bawo ruled over all the land of the Hausa, he and his seven children. The first of them was Kazūra, then Bagauda, then Uban Doma, then Gamgama, then Kumayo and then Kasanki. When Bawo died Kazūra reigned over Daura, Bagauda went to Kano, Uban Doma to Gobir, Gamgama to Zegzeg, Kumayo to Katsina and Kasanki to Kūr which is Narū [= Rano]"[21].

The footnote appears in an early section of the chronicle and is meant to explain the origin of Bagauda, the founding hero of Kano, who in the text is depicted as a foreigner. The evolution of the Hausa story – itself a consequence of the weaning power of Borno – made it possible to lift at last the veil which concealed the supposed origin of the Kano kings. Now that Bagauda was no longer the slave of the Sultan of Borno but the son of an Arab nobleman the careful chroniclers could admit that Bagauda was indeed the supposed son of Bawo.

Another copyist of the Kano Chronicle goes even further. In the

opening section devoted to Bagauda he inserts into the text, "Bagauda, son of Bawo", without taking care to notify that Bawo was the son of an Arab[22]. It is clear, towards the turn of the century, that the Hausa story had been sufficiently twisted to be no longer detrimental to the 'national' pride of the people of Kano.

Not only does this important footnote of the Kano Chronicle mention the name of Bayajidda for the first time, it also indicates clearly that Bawo was a legitimate ruler by reason of his descent from Ḥām b. Nūḥ. Hence it is no longer the Borno connection which legitimates the rule of Bawo and his sons but their Hamitic origin. Furthermore, it should be noted that the Hausa story was not only modified with respect to Bawo's origin, his descendants were also given precise names, several of which can be traced to the existing kinglists of the Hausa *bakwai*[23]. It would therefore appear that at some time during the nineteenth century the Hausa story had been expanded upward and downward from Bawo and that the basic idea of the story had been diluted to the extent that it was no longer recognizable.

In fact it would seem that, once again, the Kano chroniclers stemmed the tide of the times. British administrators noted that at the beginning of colonial rule a written account of the Hausa story was widely circulated in the court circles of the Hausa *bakwai*. In 1910 E. Arnett published a translation of an Arabic manuscript which must have come to light in Zaria because it contained a list of the rulers of Zegzeg[24]. Later Walwyn published the translation of a different version of the same story which he had obtained in Daura. Walwyn himself compared this text with an oral version of the Hausa story which was based on a different manuscript[25]. The published translations of the Hausa story vary considerably in their phrasing although their content is quite similar. To these two early versions of the new Hausa story should be added a third account of the same story published in 1952 by Hassan and Shuaibu of Abuja[26] because it comprises a few apparently authentic features not contained in the earlier versions. The main features of the expanded Hausa story may be summed up as follows:

> There was a man called Bayajidda[27] who was the son of Abdallah, the king of Baghdad[28]. Bayajidda left his home and came with his followers to Borno. He was more powerful than the king of Borno and therefore the latter gave him his daughter Magira as his wife. The king of Borno asked Bayajidda to lend him his

troops so as to aid him against his enemies. When Bayajidda was alone the king of Borno wanted to kill him but he escaped together with his wife and a concubine. At a place (later) called Biram-ta-Gabas his wife bore him a son called Biram. Bayajidda left his wife and son behind and travelled to Daura. He arrived at the house of an old woman and asked for water, but the woman told him that water could only be obtained on Fridays[29]. However, he took a bucket, went to the well and discovered that there was a snake in it. He killed the snake with his sword. The following morning the people of Daura saw that the fearful snake was dead. News of this event reached Dáurà who was the queen of the town of Dàurá. The queen promised to share the town with the hero who had slain the snake. Many false pretenders came forward. But the old woman reported that a stranger had come with a curious animal (an ox or a mule) and had been able to obtain water during the night. Bayajidda was sent for and when he produced the head of the snake he was acclaimed as the hero who had slain the snake. The queen offered him half the town, but he said that he would prefer to marry her and she accepted. Some time later his concubine[30] bore him a son named 'Mukarbi-gari' ("let us take the town")[31]. Then the queen bore him a son named Bawo[32]. After his father's death Bawo became king, and he had six children. These were Gazaure the king of Daura, Bagauda the king of Kano, Gunguma the king of Zazzau, Ubandoma (or Duma) the king of Gobir, Kumayo the king of Katsina and Zamman Kogo (or Zamna Kogi or Zamagari) the king of Rano[33].

A comparison between the Bawo-story and the Bayajidda-story shows that certain elements of the earlier story were too resistant to be done away with. In particular we note that in the new story Borno remains an important center of power, although, instead of being the seat of an omnipotent suzerain, it is transformed into a place of transit for Bayajidda. Daura, the earlier gateway to Borno now turns out to be the seat of a respectable Hausa queen and it is only on account of Bayajidda's marriage with this queen that Bawo in turn will be able to engender the founding-fathers of six states of the Hausa *bakwai*, with Biram remaining outside the sphere of the really independent Hausa states. Also 'Karba-gari' survives in the Bayajidda-story, but the suggestion has lost its sting: instead of legitimizing the rule of

Bawo over the Hausa *bakwai* – as may be inferred from Barth's version of the Bawo-story – he is now made to be the irrelevant son of a concubine.

It should further be asked how the change from the Bawo-story to the Bayajidda-story was brought about? Are we to imagine an ongoing process of changing oral traditions or was the expanded version drawn up as the result of a deliberate choice? The answer to this question is not easy since it would appear that all Hausa stories collected in the twentieth century represent the same basic tendency to disconnect the history of the Hausa states from Borno. The story of Bayajidda itself is echoed by the story collected by Landeroin of the hero from Baghdad who came to Daura, which in turn seems to elaborate on the kind of information collected by Barth concerning the Baghdadi apostle of Daura, the *"dodō"*, and the dry well. On the other hand there is the story of the fleeing stablemaster of the Sultan of Borno transcribed by Mischlich and there exist a number of related stories[34]. Perhaps even more attempts were made independently or in conjunction with these two main currents of tradition building on the Bawo-story with shifts of emphasis.

In the case of the complete Bayajidda-story it should be noted that the early known versions were obtained from Arabic manuscripts. One of these manuscripts, the text of the Chronicle of Daura, which contains the most authoritative version of the Bayajidda-story, can be traced back to the middle of the nineteenth century. Indeed the manuscript was part of the private property of Sarkin Nuhu of Daura who had to leave his home-town Daura (-Zango) soon after 1851. The property was seized in 1861 by Tanimun, the Sultan of Zinder. Towards 1920 the manuscript – or a copy of it – was finally restored to the rulers of Daura[35]. The full text of the Chronicle of Daura was translated by Walwyn[36]; an abridged copy of the same text, preserved in Zinder, was published by A. Salifou[37]. Another copy of the text apparently found its way to Zaria where the early parts of it were used as an introduction to the local kinglist[38].

Some of the information contained in the Daura Chronicle must have been obtained from persons with knowledge of other Hausa kingdoms, otherwise the chroniclers could not have inserted the names of the founding heroes of the Hausa *bakwai* at the end of the Bayajidda-story. These names – Bagauda for Kano, Kumayo for Katsina etc. – replace the names of the individual states which, in the Bawo-story, were also supposed to be the names of the first

kings. They figure in all authoritative versions of the Daura Chronicle and in particular in the document which was returned from Zinder to Daura[39]. We therefore have to admit that this kind of historical information was collected at a time when the rulers of Daura had decided to produce an authoritative version of the revised Hausa story by taking into account the existing oral traditions concerning the queen of Daura, the arrival of 'Alī al-Baghdādī and the elimination of the old religious cult centered on the pagan divinity *dodō*.

But the decision to write a revised historical account of the origin of the Hausa states must also be seen in relation to a clear-cut ideological purpose. At the beginning of the nineteenth century Fulani jihadists, inspired by the teachings of Uthman dan Fodio, had overrun the Hausa states, replacing the Hausa dynasts by Fulani rulers. Only a few Hausa rulers could preserve their kingdoms, and this on a reduced scale. This was true of the ruling dynasty of Daura (-Zango)[40]. In a political context in which the Hausa rump-states had little to expect from their former Bornoan overlords and a lot to fear from their Fulani rivals, any attempt to rally popular support by giving new impetus to the claim of the Hausa dynasties for legitimate rule must have been most welcome[41]. However, the supposed Bornoan slave Bawo was certainly not the appropriate figure. Under the new political circumstances created in the Central Sudan by the Fulani *jihād*, an Arab hero called Abū Yazīd – shaped into an African state-founder by his Bornoan experience and popularized in Hausaland as Bayajidda – would certainly be helpful in promoting a renewed sense of a common Hausa culture and political destiny.

The historians of Kano were quick to pick up the new idea; but instead of inserting into their chronicle a new reminder of the Borno connection – which the first chronicler had attempted to obliterate – they once more avoided any allusion to the influential role of their powerful eastern neighbour in the history of Hausaland and, in addition, they invented the first African version of a Hamitic myth of origin.

Notes

* The arguments developed in this article owe much to a stimulating work-session with J. O. Hunwick in August 1986, which was devoted to the edition and translation of the *Rawḍāt al-afkār* by 'Abd al-Qādir b. al-Muṣṭafā (1824).

I am grateful to Joe McIntyre for helping to correct my English.

[1] M. Last, 1980: 161–2. M. G. Smith (1983: 41–5) favours a sixteenth century date for the first writing-up of the Kano Chronicle but his arguments, based on a compute of reign-lengths contained in various existing kinglists, are unconvincing.

[2] Last, 1983: 82.

[3] Hallam gives a useful though entirely uncritical summary of the Bayajidda legend. His attempt to link Bayajidda with the tenth century Abū Yazīd of Ifrīqiya (Tunisia) is unfounded (Hallam, 1966: 47–60).

[4] Last, 1983: 80–2.

[5] East, 1933, II: 31. Also *Ta'rīkh arbāb Kanū*, Nig. Nat. Museum, Jos, Ms. 46: § 29 I. 69. Palmer translates "Hausaland" (Palmer, 1928, III: 119). This mistranslation partly explains why Last and others considered that the story of the 'Hausa seven' reflects a late development.

[6] Ciecierska-Chlapowa, 1964: 243.

[7] *Ta'rīkh arbāb Kanū*, Jos; § 40 II. 4–7; trans. Palmer, 1928, III: 126.

[8] *Ta'rīkh arbāb Kanū*, Ms. Jos: § 40 II. 4–7; trans. Palmer, 1928, III: 126. "All of them" would appear to be an allusion to the rulers of the Hausa *bakwai*. Palmer omits it.

[9] Bello, 1964: 44 II. 4–5.

[10] Ibid.: 44 II. 6–8. Bello seems to apply the term 'Sūdāniyyūn' to the Hausa people. The term 'Barbar' (Berber) is either used in reference to the Sayfuwa, the ruling dynasty of Borno, or to the Beriberi (Kanuri).

[11] Ibid.: 44 II. 9–11.

[12] 'Abd al-Qādir, *Rawḍāt al-afkār*, § 4.2. The reference is to the Arabic edition and English translation of this chronicle prepared by J. O. Hunwick and the present author. The edition is based on an autograph manuscript held by Wazir Junayd of Sokoto (uncat. ms., private collection).

[13] Ibid.: 4.3.

[14] Ibid.: 4.4.

[15] Ibid.: 4.4.

[16] Barth, 1857, II: 81 (German ed.).

[17] In Kanuri the word *mə́lima* is used in reference to both a "groom" (Lukas, 1937: 226; ə́ = retroflex) and a particular royal titleholder. According to Nachtigal the *Mulima* was always of slave origin (1879, I: 721). The word *mulima* is also used in dialects of eastern

Hausaland (Daura, Damagaram) where it means "groom" or "stable-master" (field notes).

[18] Mischlich, 1907: 155–63.

[19] Probably a translation of the term *dodō*. On the meaning of this term see G. Nicolas, 1975: 532–3.

[20] Landeroin in Tilho, 1911: 456–7.

[21] *Ta'rīkh arbāb Kanū*, f. 3 v; trans. Palmer, 1928, III: 98 (Palmer's translation was first published in 1908).

[22] See the Hausa translation of the *Ta'rīkh arbāb Kanū* by F. Edgar from an unknown Arabic manuscript which dates from 1911 (Nig. Nat. Arch. Kad., O/AR 2/41) f. 3 l. 51.

[23] Bagauda of Kano in: *Ta'rīkh arbāb Kanū*, f. 5r.
Uban Doma of Gobir in: *Rawḍāt al-afkār*, § 6.3.
Gamgama of Zegzeg in Arnett, 1910: 165.
Kumayo of Katsina in Barth, 1857, I: 474–5.

[24] Arnett, 1910: 161: 67.

[25] Walwyn in Palmer, 1928: III: 132–8. A late copy of the manuscript translated by Walwyn has recently come to light in Zinder. It has been published by A. Salifou and translated by A. Bioud (Salifou, 1971: 203–43). So far this is the only published version of the expanded Hausa story, but unfortunately this version has been seriously abridged by later copyists.

[26] Hassan and Shuaibu, 1952: 1–4.

[27] In the early Daura version of the Hausa story the hero is called Abū Yazīd, although in the Daura kinglist the father of Bawo is given as Bayajidda (Walwyn in Palmer, 1928, III: 134, 142; Salifou, 1971: 233, 235).

[28] Barth gives the interesting information that Daura claimed an apostle of its own, Muḥammad 'Alī al-Baghdādī, and he connects this person with the famous Sīdi Baghdādī of Aïr (Barth, 1857, I: 472 n.). Landeroin was told that the founding hero of the Hausa states came from Baghdad, but his informants did not know his name (in Tilho, 1911, II: 457).

[29] The Daura Chronicle published by Salifou contains supplementary, perhaps authentic information according to which the people who approached the well were killed by the snake unless they came together with their Emir (Salifou, 1971: 206, 234).

[30] Only the early version of the Daura Chronicle translated by Walwyn notes that the 'concubine' who gave birth to 'Mukarbigari' came from Borno (Walwyn in Palmer, 1928, III: 134); all other ver-

sions transform her into a present given by the queen of Daura to her husband (Arnett, 1910: 164; Walwyn, oral version, in Palmer, 1928, III: 234; Hassan and Shuaibu, 1952: 3).

[31] In 'Mukarbi-gari' we recognize a diluted form of 'Karbagari' ("town-seizer"), a name given in Barth's version of the Hausa story to the father of Bawo (Barth, 1857, I: 471). Accordingly the Daura Chronicle transforms the name of Bawo into 'Bawo-gari' ("give the town back again") (a form only contained in Walwyn's translations, in Palmer, 1928, III: 134). The new etymology neatly does away with the awkward resemblance of the name Bawo with the Hausa word *bāwa* "slave".

[32] Or: 'Bawo-gari' as in Walwyn's translation (in Palmer, 1928, III: 134).

[33] It will appear from this summary of the expanded version of the Hausa story, that I considered Walwyn's version to be the most authoritative. A full account of the expanded version can only be given when the relationship between written and oral versions of the Hausa story is better understood.

[34] The author, together with J. O. Hunwick, hopes to present soon a fuller account of the different versions of the Hausa story and a more elaborate assessment of their historical implications.

[35] See Landeroin in Tilho, 1911, II: 443, 445; Walwyn in Palmer, 1928, III: 138, 140–1; Salifou, 1971: 77.

[36] Walwyn in Palmer, 1928, III: 132–34.

[37] Salifou, 1971: 203–204. Unfortunately Salifou does not explain from whom he obtained his manuscript. Elsewhere he notes that Sarkin Dawaki Damo had restituted the manuscript to its proprietors in Daura (ibid.: 77 n. 3), confirming thus the information provided by Walwyn (in Palmer, 1928, III: 132).

[38] Arnett, 1910: 161–67.

[39] Note, however, that the Arabic text of the Zinder manuscript has only the names Azaure (for Kazaure) and Bagauda and then continues with the fifth name of the Daura kinglist. This omission does not appear from the translation which Salifou has apparently streamlined by drawing on Walwyn's translation of the Daura Chronicle (Salifou, 1971: 207, 235).

[40] M. G. Smith, 1978: 143–236.

[41] The Kano chroniclers disregarded also the effects of the Fulani *jihād*. M. G. Smith notes that the Kano Chronicle "gives an extraordinary terse account of the Fulani *jihād* at Kano" (Smith, 1983: 47).

Bibliography

Arnett, E. J., 1910: A Hausa Chronicle; in: Journal of the African Society, 9: 161–7.

Barth, H., 1857–9: Travels and Discoveries in North and Central-Africa . . . in the Years 1849–1855, 3 vols. New York.

–, 1857–9. Reisen und Entdeckungen in Nord- und Central-Afrika . . in den Jahren 1849 bis 1855, 5 vols. Gotha.

Bello, Muḥammad, 1964: *Infāq al-maysūr fī ta'rikh bilād al-Takrūr*, ed. A. Gummi, Cairo. Trans. E. J. Arnett, The Rise of the Sokoto Fulani, Kano, 1922.

Ciecierska-Chlapowa, T., 1964: Extraits de fragments du *Siyāḥat-name* d'Evliyā Çelebī concernant l'Afrique Noire; in: Folia Orientalia, 6: 239–44.

East, R., ed. 1933: *Hausawa da makwabtansu*, 2 vols. Zaria.

Hallam, W., 1966: The Bayajidda legend in Hausa folklore; in: Journal of African History, 7 (1): 47–60.

Hassan, M., and M. Shuaibu, 1952: Chronicle of Abuja. Ibadan.

Ibn al-Muṣṭafā, 'Abd al-Qādir: *Rawḍāt al-afkār*, ed. and trans. J. O. Hunwick and D. Lange (in preparation). See also H. R. Palmer, Western Sudan history, the Raudthāt'ul afkāri; in: Journal of the Royal African Society, 1915–16: 261–73.

Last, M., 1980: Historical metaphors in the intellectual history of Kano before 1800; in: History in Africa, 7: 161–78.

–, 1983: From Sultanate to Caliphate: Kano, 1450–1800 A.D.; in: B. Barkindo, ed. Studies in the History of Kano; Ibadan: 67–91.

Lukas, J., 1937: A Study of the Kanuri Language. Oxford.

Mischlich, A., 1907: Über Sitten und Gebräuche der Hausa; in: Mitteilungen des Seminars für Orientalische Sprachen zu Berlin, Abt. III, 10: 155–81.

Nachtigal, G., 1879–89: Sahara und Sudan. Ergebnisse sechsjähriger Reisen in Afrika; 3 vols. Berlin, Leipzig.

Nicolas, G., 1975: Dynamique sociale et appréhension du monde au sein d'une société hausa. Paris.

Palmer, H. R., 1928: Sudanese Memoirs, being mainly translations of a number of Arabic manuscripts relating to the Central and Western Sudan; 3 vols. Lagos.

Salifou, A., 1971: Le Damagaram, ou sultanat de Zinder au XIX^e siècle. Niamey.

Smith, M. G. 1978: The Affairs of Daura. Berkeley.

–, 1983: The Kano Chronicle as History, in: B. Barkindo, ed. Studies in the History of Kano. Ibadan: 31–56.

Ta'rikh arbāb Kanū, Nig. Nat. Museum, Jos, Ms. 46. Trans. as Kano Chronicle, in: Palmer, 1928: III: 92–132.

Tilho, J., ed. 1911: Documents scientifiques de la mission Tilho (1906–1909); 2 vols. Paris.

The Pre-Islamic Dimension of Hausa History

Von
DIERK LANGE
Bayreuth

For too long historians have looked at the past of the Hausa people from the angle of Arabic texts alone. This approach is hampered by the limitations of the source material: the Arabic texts are few in number; they convey only little historically significant information, and they reflect the Muslim point of view. With respect to the pre-Islamic past of Hausaland these shortcomings outweigh the advantages of written sources: apart from the relatively recent dynastic history there is hardly any other aspect of the past which can be recovered through this material. Moreover, Muslims cannot be expected to provide an adequate description of their pagan arch-enemies. Recently some attention has been devoted to oral traditions, but these traditions were only known from written versions, and hence once more the Islamic bias was allowed to distort the original material. Other aspects of the rich pre-Islamic inheritance of the Hausa people, such as the Bori possession cult, the ceremonies associated with kingship and the yearly festivals, have not yet received the attention from historians that they deserve. Even if none of these pre-Islamic remnants survived in their original forms, it should be possible to recover their former religious dimensions from the secularistic reshaping of these institutions which took place during the seven centuries of Islamic penetration.

From a more theoretical point of view, the main obstacle in re-assessing the pre-Islamic past of the Hausa is evolutionism. According to this predominant approach in African history, simple and unsophisticated institutions became more complex and multi-functional over time. Individual institutions are therefore considered to be either the result of an internal process of elaboration, the outcome of interactions between neighbouring people or the product of long-distance trade. This prevalent perception of the African past is entirely consistent with the Islamic view of the *jāhiliyya* – „the time of ignorance" which presupposes a state of barbarism prior to Islam. As theoretical evolutionism is being reinforced by one-sided source material, the historian of Hausaland is now faced with a well-enshrined „orthodox view" of Hausa history.[1]

There is however a third obstacle to a sober re-evaluation of pre-Islamic Hausa history which is more difficult to counter than the two previous ones: the Hamitic hypothesis. During the colonial period it was generally supposed that in Africa tangible progress was only achieved by foreigners. Just as European powers of the colonial age

[1] According to the expression used by John Sutton in his polemic against Abdullahi Smith (Towards a less orthodox history, 179–201). For full references see bibliography at the end of the article.

were thought to have brought modern civilisation to Africa, it was also held that all cultural achievements of previous periods were the result of earlier immigrants from outside Africa. Reacting against these colonialist assumptions the historians of independent Africa denied that there was any foreign impact on Africa prior to Islam and European expansion. However, it is now clear that this reaction has not only channelled the energies of research towards a vigorously African perspective of the African past, but has also erected a formidable barrier between Africa and the outside world.

Disregarding the present trend of research, this article proposes to adopt a comparative perspective. It suggests that the oral traditions which trace the origin of the Hausa states to the Near East are basically correct. There is no need to resort to the feedback theory and to assume that the inheritors of this great state tradition have been misled by Islam when they claim that their country of origin was Canaan. Looking at the question of origins without preconceptions, we find that a rather coherent body of legend, myth, ritual and linguistic elements supports the idea that the earliest bearers of Hausa culture, insofar as they are at present identifiable, were Hebrews.

1. The Hausa legend: written and oral versions

Any serious consideration of the pre-Islamic history of the Hausa people should begin with the Hausa legend. In brief the legend tells the story of the indigenous queen of Daura, Magajiya, and the foreign hero Bayajidda, their marriage after the killing of the dreadful snake and the origin of the Hausa nation:

> While Magajiya is said to descend from immigrants originating from Canaan, Bayajidda was supposedly the son of the king of Baghdad. Having fled from his home town, he reached Borno with a large contingent of troops. He married the daughter of the king, but in danger of being killed by his father-in-law, he fled further west. Next he halted at Garun Gabas, where his Bornoan wife gave birth to his first son called Biram. Leaving his wife and his son behind, the hero once more fled further west, and then came to the well of Daura. Here he was told by an old woman who dwelled near the well that a snake lived in the well, which only allowed the people of the town to fetch water on Fridays. Bayajidda killed the snake and married the queen Magajiya. But the queen was an elderly woman, therefore she gave him a slave concubine. In due time the concubine delivered a boy called Karbagari (town-seizer). Subsequently Magajiya also delivered a boy; he was called Bawo (return [the town]). Karbagari became the ancestor of the founders of the „seven useless" states *(banzaa bakwài)*, while Bawo fathered six founders of the „seven Hausa" states *(Hausaa bakwài)*. The seventh state was founded by Biram, the first son of Bayajidda.

In this context it should be further noted that most Hausa consider their language to be the main distinctive feature between the *Hausa bakwai* and the *banza bakwai* states.

Often quoted, the Hausa legend has until now remained impenetrable for the analytical mind of the historians. A number of authors have related it to a supposed Bornoan ascendancy over the Hausa states, but these attempts are unconvincing, as

we shall see below. Before considering the different theories designed to explain the historical meaning of the Daura story, we have to turn our attention to the written sources. Even if they have nothing to say about the origin of the story, they will perhaps clarify its recent evolution.

The earliest, vague reference to the legend is found in the Kano Chronicle where Kutumbi (c. 1623–1648) is said to have been very powerful „among the *Hausa bakwai*".[2] The Sokoto scholars from the beginning of the nineteenth century provide more details: Muḥammad Bello, who wrote in 1812, considered Bawo, the well-known ancestor of the *Hausa bakwai*, to have been a slave governor of the Sultan of Borno;[3] around 1824 'Abd al-Qādir b. al-Muṣṭafā is the first to mention Daura as the gateway of the Hausa kings to Borno.[4] But the Muslim scholars from Sokoto dismissed the mythical aspects of the legend. We have to wait until 1853 to get from H. Barth the basic outline of the tradition, which also contains its core-element, the killing of the snake called Dodo. At this point, we also learn that the hero came from Baghdad and that he was called Muḥammad 'Alī. Further, we realize that the legend ascribes the foundation of the Hausa states to the killing of the snake and not to the political domination of Borno.[5] Therefore it would seem that the entirely demythologised versions of the Sokoto authors were the result of a deliberate attempt to present a secular interpretation of the remnants of a pre-Islamic myth.

In fact, the prestige of the written records has until now distracted the attention of researchers from a thorough investigation of the genuine oral traditions. To be sure, the more extensive versions of the Hausa legend presently available in print are translations from closely related Arabic manuscripts. Titled *Kitāb mulūk Dawra* (Book of the kings of Daura) the original text may have been composed in Daura itself, the small but prestigious centre of early Hausaland. Copies of it are known to have been kept in Daura, Damagaram, Kano, Zaria and Abuja.[6] One copy even reached western Borno, where it was used for the composition of the so-called Masfarma Chronicle.[7] We know the *K. mulūk Dawra* through a number of translations, but only one original Arabic text.[8] The age and the circumstances of its composition being unknown, it can only be surmised that the text was designed to provide an ideological platform for the Hausa people who fought at the beginning of the nineteenth century against the Fulani jihadists. In spite of this anti-jihadist and hence somewhat anti-Islamic tendency, it would be very surprising if a mythical tradition translated into Arabic by Muslim

2 Palmer: Memoirs, III, 119; Lange: Evolution, 196.
3 Bello: *Infāq*, 44; transl. Arnett: Rise, 12.
4 Palmer: Western Sudan history, 265.
5 Barth: Origin of the Hausa ‚bokkoi', 293–5; id.: Travels, 472 n.
6 Walwyn: History of Daura, 152–154; Salifou: Damagaram, 201–243; Meek: Northern Tribes, I, 74 f. (Kano); Arnett: Hausa chronicle, 162–165 (Zaria); Hassan and Shuaibu: Chronicle of Abuja, 1–4; Palmer: Hausa legend, 231–235.
7 Palmer: Sudanese Memoirs, III, 149–153.
8 Salifou: Damagaram, 203–245.

scholars was not considerably distorted in order to make it conform to the Islamic worldview.

During a recent research trip to Nigeria and Niger, the author was able to supplement the available information with new evidence. With respect to the text of the Hausa legend the following details, which add to the elements known from the written versions, are noteworthy:

> Prior to the arrival of Bayajidda the inhabitants of Daura had to pacify the snake with a special song in order to obtain water from the well; when Bayajidda – or rather Abū Yazīd – came to the region he first went to Gaya where he met the Abagayawa blacksmiths who forged a special knife for him; the old woman living near the well was called Ayana; the snake itself is known by three different names: Sarki (king), Dodo and Bajimi; once the news of the killing of the snake had spread, only the Kaura, the army leader, was brave enough to ascertain that the monster was really dead; the killing of the snake was followed by mixed reactions of the inhabitants of Daura, some rejoiced and others were sad; the slave concubine of Bayajidda was called Bagwariya; Bagwariya gave to her son the name Karab-da-Gari (forced entry into the town), not Karbagari (received the town); Magajiya was succeeded by her own son Bawo, not by Bayajidda; Bawo declared Karbagari to be his slave and he instructed him to practise the pagan rituals (*Maaguzanci*); he further commissioned him to supervise the court organisation; Karbagari sired the founders of the *banza bakwai* (useless seven) situated in the southwestern fringe areas of Hausaland.[9]

Some of these details were already mentioned by M. G. Smith in his voluminous study on the evolution of the political institutions of Daura.[10]

Other versions of the Hausa legends were recorded in Gobir, Katsina, Kano and Zamfara.[11] They vary in three important details with respect to the Daura version: the dragon-slaying hero is called Bawa (Kano), Abawa Jidda (Gobir, Katsina) or Abajidda (Korgom); the creature in the well is considered to have been a spirit *(aljanii)* and at the same time a serpent; in a Zamfara version it is explicitly stated that the body of the snake was divided into twelve parts;[12] other versions mention the remains of the snake which formed one huge heap in front of the well (Katsina, Korgom) or seven heaps (Kano, Gobir).[13] The last detail should be compared with the Canaanite notion of a seven headed dragon Leviathan and the splitting of the body of Tiâmat which, according to the Babylonian creation myth, gave rise to the universe.[14]

Authors of the colonial period often subscribed to the Berber theory, according to which the northern neighbours of the Negro-Africans played a decisive role in the

9 Alasan Abdurrahaman, prince and court historian (born ca. 1932), field notes: Daura, 7/8/95.
10 M. G. Smith: Daura, 52–57.
11 Sarkin Anna interviewed in Hissatao, 2/4/95; Dan Sadaka interviewed in Maradi, 1/4/95; Abubakr son of Sarkin Kano Attahiru interviewed in Maradou, 24/4/95.
12 Krieger: Geschichte, 19.
13 Dan Sadaka interviewed in Maradi, 1/4/95; Tarno, field notes: Korgom, 11/8/95; Tahida Mahaman interviewed in Maradou, 24/4/95; Nicolas: Dynamique, 227.
14 Gibson: Canaanite Myths, 50; Ps. 74: 14; Dalley: Myths, 254 f.; see also Day: God's Conflict, 1–18; M. Smith: Early History, 52, 58.

state-building process of sub-Saharan Africa. With respect to Hausa history they suggested that Bayajidda was a partisan of the Berber rebel Abū Yazīd Makhlad who was killed by the Fāṭmids in 947. They supposed that this surviving partisan of Abū Yazīd marched across the Sahara at the head of the remnants of the defeated Berber army. Further, they thought that in Daura he married the indigenous queen after some kind of exploit later identified to be the killing of the snake.[15] This attempt to solve the enigma of the Hausa legend is as unconvincing as the Borno theory, because it is solely based on the apparent similitude of two names. In particular, it neglects the fact that Abū Yazīd is the Arabic form of an indigenous, quite different name. Furthermore, there is no evidence whatsoever that any partisans of Abū Yazīd reached Borno or Hausaland. And indeed, it is very unlikely that a defeated and lonely refugee, who had lost his army in Borno, could transform a preexisting chiefdom into a powerful kingdom.

During the postcolonial period scholars stressed the Promethean character of African societies. In terms of Hausa history this meant that they tried to relate the Daura legend to the medieval or early modern history of the Central Sudan. Abdullahi Smith thought that the legend was based on the historical fact that a number of Hausa states payed tribute to Borno from the fifteenth century onwards.[16] M. G. Smith, who conducted extensive historical and anthropological research in Daura, noted the great significance of the legend for the constitution of the kingdom. However, in spite of the firm belief of the people of Daura that the legend refers to events of the pre-Islamic period, he stipulated that the legend reflects the beginning of the Bornoan domination over Hausaland which he dated to the sixteenth century.[17] The present author tried to tie the key-events of the Daura legend into the medieval history of Kanem-Borno by connecting Karbagari with the anti-Sayfid Duguwa of the thirteenth and fourteenth century and Bawo with the pro-Sayfid Duguwa of the fifteenth century.[18] These theories assume that the dragon-story was „invented" during the Islamic period of Hausa history or at least that it reflects the repercussions on Hausaland of the struggle for power between the Duguwa and the Sayfuwa in Kanem-Borno. Further they imply that certain institutions of the Hausa kingdoms, which are similar to institutions of Borno, resulted from the profound cultural impact left by Borno after a long period of domination.

A good example for such cultural transfers appeared to be the office of the queen mother, called Magira in Borno and Magajiya in Hausaland.[19] However, if such a transfer of a key institution of the political system has really taken place, it cannot

15 Palmer: Bornu Sahara, 273 f.; Hallam: Bayajida, 49 f.; see also Fage: History, 63.
16 A. Smith: Some considerations, 336.
17 M. G. Smith: Daura, 55–6.
18 Lange: HausaTraditionen, 57–60.
19 Lange: Königinmutter, 143–4.

possibly have occurred during the Islamic period,[20] when women had to submit to the patriarchal order. Nor is it plausible that a legend based on the dragon-slayer motif was elaborated at a time when Islamic rationalism began to shape the minds of the people. In the light of the anthropological data recently collected in Daura with respect to the Gani festival, it would rather appear that the regional paradigm cannot account for the numerous culture traits which the societies of the Central Sudan have in common. There are good reasons to believe that the Hausa legend itself and the associated ritual of the Gani festival are rooted in the West Semitic kingship ideology of the pre-Hellenistic period.

2. The Gani festival of Daura

Nearly all the inhabitants of Daura believe today that the Gani festival *(sallàr Gàanii)* is nothing other than the celebration of the Prophet's birthday, the *mawlūd* or *mawlid al-nabī*. On account of the actual date of the festival, the 12th Rabī' I of the Muslim calendar, they claim that the Gani has always been identical to the *mawlūd*. However, some features of the festival point to a pre-Islamic origin and a later accomodation with Islam: in Daura the Gani, like the two other Muslim festivals, the *'īd al-aḍḥā* (sacrificial feast) and the *'īd al-fiṭr* (festival of the breaking of the fast), is celebrated by a horse-riding procession performed by the nobles and commoners of the kingdom during two days; the Gani festival was until recently associated with sexual licence in which women went with men of their choice; during the festival foreigners were highly welcomed and treated with great respect; the Gani festival is not only known in northeastern Hausaland (Daura, Gummel, Hadeja, Korgom, Kance, Zinder and Agadez) but also in Borno (where the procession was abolished at the beginning of this century) and in fringe-areas of the Islamic world such as Nupe and Borgu. In all these regions it is now generally believed that the Gani is a local form of the *mawlid al-nabī*. However, the common non-Islamic name and the important role of the king during this festival give rise to the suspicion that we are dealing here with a phenomenon belonging to a common pre-Islamic substratum.[21]

On the basis of my recent research in Daura, it can now be advanced that the Gani was originally a New Year's festival during which the people commemorated the „killing of the snake" *(murnàr kashè maciijii)*. Today only very few people are aware of the pre-Islamic background of the Gani. One might even doubt the validity of such a statement, if it was not supported by a secret ritual which, until recently, was performed by the king himself.

On the eve of the Gani around midnight, the king went secretly to the Kusugu well to fetch water. He was dressed in modest, old clothes and wore simple sandals on his feet, but on his shoulder

[20] As wrongly assumed in ibid., 143 f., 154.
[21] Lange: Schango, 231.

hung the sword of Bayajidda and in his hand he held upright the knife of Bayajidda. His closest official, the Shamaki, walked in front of him and two Dakama singers followed him to the well. They marched silently, but when they arrived at the well the Dakama sang the song called *Sikede kimemme* so as to propitiate the „king of the well" *(sarkin riijiyaa)*. The modern, Hausa version of the song, which is supposedly a translation of the older, uncomprehensible *Sikede kimemme*, can be rendered in English as follows:

> You, whoever you are in the well / we are waiting for you
> we are late in the day / we did not drink water
> here we have come / waiting for you.

After approaching the well, the king himself let the bucket into the well and lifted it up again. At this point the Dakama sang *Sikede kimemme* for the second time. The king then drank some water and poured the remainder into a brass vessel *(langà)* held by the Shamaki. Subsequently the Shamaki covered the vessel with a lid, hid it under his gown and carried it to the palace. Finally both sat briefly together in the vestibule of Gani *(zaurèn Gàanii)*, where the Shamaki handed the water over to the king who took it into his bedroom. Early in the morning the king took a cup and drank from the water. The last drops he poured on his hands and performed an ablution involving his hands, his face and his arms. He practised this ritual every morning, using the water sparingly, so that it would last for the seven days of the festival.

Apparently the entire ritual was recently abandoned under the pressure of Islamists, who branded it as a „pagan custom".[22]

A public commemoration of the „killing of the snake" takes place during the Gani festival in the form of a great procession in which all the titled officials of the kingdom and their retainers participate.[23]

The king is on horseback holding in his right hand the knife of Bayajidda, while the sword of Bayajidda is hanging from his left shoulder. He is preceded by the five female Dakama singers on foot, on his right side he is escorted by the Shamaki on horseback. The king is followed by a camel carrying the two royal *tambari* drums, a beat on the right one signifying „Canaan" and a beat on the left one „Lamurudu". Then three smaller drums carried by two other camels respond „son of Canaan" (*d'an Kan'aan*).[24] Next follow twelve unmounted horses *(dawaakin zhager)*, one of which carries the saddle of Bayajidda, called *Badaura* (the one of Daura). The praise-song which the Dakama sing for the king hails him as the forefather of the children of Bawo and the grandfather of the Arna (pagans), and as the one who has the extraordinary weapon called *Dàsnà*. But the king is also praised by the song *Sikede kimemme* which was originally sung for the „king of the well".

On the second day of the Gani festival there is another procession which starts in the morning in front of the palace where the previous procession finished in the evening. Its main event is the „greeting of the Magajiya" in her house situated close to the southeastern edge of the palace. Having reached the Magajiya's house, the king and the highest officials dismount in order to pay their respects to the first lady of Daura, who is the „official mother" of the king and the second highest ranking person of the kingdom.[25] The reverence shown to the great lady is generally explained

[22] Alh. Lawal Daura, Shamaki, field notes: Daura, 19/8/95.
[23] See photo in M. G. Smith: Daura, following p. 29.
[24] Similarly Hogben and Kirk-Greene: Emirates, 148.
[25] M. G. Smith notes that the Magajiya has constitutionally the right to depose the king (Daura, 257 f.).

as an act designed to acknowledge her royal status prior to the coming of Bayajidda and the killing of the snake. Likewise, people of the royal palace still show the visitor a number of places on the first floor which are said to date back to the time when Magajiya was the sole master of the palace. In the praise-songs the earlier status of the Lady is made more explicit: she is hailed as the „owner of Dodo" *(màì Dòoddo)* and, more surprisingly, as the „woman of many men" *(ỳar maràn mazaa dà yawàa)*. After the greeting of the Magajiya the procession sets in motion again, passes by the house of Ayana and having crossed the southern precincts of the town turns back to the palace.

The other two festivals, the *babbar salla (ʿīd al-aḍḥā)* and the *karamar salla (ʿīd al-fiṭr)*, follow a similar pattern, the procession also covering two days with a visit to the Magajiya on the second day. However, it is only the Gani festival which officially extends over seven days. Because the associated activities, such as popular rejoicing on a large scale and sexual licence, many people still consider the Gani to be the most important yearly festival. This is contrary to Islamic practice, according to which *mawlūd* is a minor festival. In eastern Hausaland we find a different situation: the procedure of the Gani was here probably transferred to the two other properly Islamic festivals which do not have an independent pre-Islamic background.

The Gani was not only the joyful celebration of the „killing of the snake", it also had a political dimension. Daura informants claim that in the period before the Fulani *jihād*, the king of Daura invited his counterparts from the six other *Hausa bakwai* kingdoms to partake in the celebration of the festival. Even today the visitor of the palace is shown the *zauren Gani* (vestibule of Gani), a reception hall in the inner palace, where the Hausa rulers are supposed to have held their yearly meeting. Furthermore, the formal installation of the king should ideally take place only during the Gani festival. During the interim between two reigns the government would be headed by the Kaura, the slave commander of the army.[26] Likewise, the turbaning of the important title-holders of the kingdom is said to be restricted to the Gani.[27] Today, the different ceremonies of the Gani festival are no longer considered to be rooted in the pre-Islamic past of the kingdom. Indeed, only a few people of the palace – the king himself, the Shamaki, the court historian Alasan Abdurrahaman and the Dakama singers – are aware that the Gani festival was originally designed to celebrate the „killing of the snake". All the other inhabitants of Daura are convinced that the Gani is just an indigenous word referring to the *mawlūd*.

In Korgom, between Maradi and Zinder, we encounter a similar situation: once more the people concerned consider the feast to be entirely dedicated to the celebration of the Islamic *mawlūd*. However, the persistent investigator is told after some time that the main feature of the Gani procession here is the fierceful charge in full gallop towards a tree, followed by a respectful greeting. This ceremony is first executed by the king himself and then by all the horse-riders participating in the procession. The tree is an

26 Not mentioned by M. G. Smith: Daura, 98–103.
27 This timing is not mentioned by M. G. Smith: Daura, 97–103.

acacia called „the Gao of victory" *(Gàon nasaràa)*. After showing their respect to the tree, the horse-riders of the procession turn back to the town. Although the relationship between this ceremony and the killing of the snake is not clear, we are obviously once more faced with the remnants of a pre-Islamic feast which remains the core-element of the most important yearly ceremony.[28] Moreover, in Korgom the appointments to the important offices seem to take place, as as in Daura, during the Gani festival.

Going one step further we may ask what the original significance of the Gani festival may have been. There can be little doubt that the king of Daura was – and to a certain extent still is – identified with the hero from the east who killed the snake and married the queen *(sàraunìyaa)*. Furthermore, it is very likely that the water ritual, performed until recently by the king, represents only the remains of a ceremony which was once more elaborate. In addition to the fetching of the water and the daily ablutions, the original ritual may have included a feigned combat with the „king of the well" or the sea god. The Kusugu well once figured also prominently in the installation ritual. Before being properly installed the king lives for one week in seclusion in a stable of the Shamaki's quarters.[29] During this period the newly appointed king secretly went to the well every night to fetch water for himself, because he was allowed to drink only the water of Kusugu. When he first arrived at the well with the Shamaki, the latter poured water from the well over him, thereby wetting all the king's clothes, which he subsequently took for himself. During the whole period of seclusion, the king was not even allowed to take a bath, so that he would not touch any other water. Hence it would appear that the activities of the original Gani festival and the installation rituals consisted of reenactments of certain mythological events performed by the king and the high dignitaries of the state.

The deeper meaning of the rituals was no longer understood by those who practised them. The main reason for this ignorance would seem to be the replacement of the pre-Islamic religion of the Hausa by Islam. A somewhat unexpected model of interpretation is provided by the myths of Ugarit, which were discovered from 1929 onwards in Ras Shamra, in the ruins of a Syrian seaport dating from the thirteenth century BC. These findings shed new light on the Canaanite religion and culture, which otherwise were only known from the Bible and from some information recorded by Greek authors.[30] In the light of the Ugaritic myths, it would appear that the actors of the Daura legend were once viewed as gods and goddesses and not human beings and monsters, the secularization of these myths and their transformation into legend being a necessary consequence of the substitution of the old religion by Islam.

To begin with Bayajidda, or Bāwa Jibda, as the state god is called more properly,[31] we notice that he has several traits of Baal (Bawa), who vanquished the sea god, Yam.

28 Description provided by the king of Korgom, Adamu Duna, Korgom, 11/8/95.
29 M. G. Smith only mentions the weekly seclusion without giving further details (Daura: 102).
30 Loretz: Ugarit und die Bibel.
31 Thus in the Gobir king list owned by Dan Akali, Tsibiri. The Tarno of Korgom calls him Abajidda

The king of Daura, who is considered to be the direct successor of Bayajidda, is called in praise-songs „owner of the white knife" *(mài farar urukaa)*, the „owner of the *dàsonó* " (a mysterious weapon, perhaps an axe), „owner of Daura, God of the slaves" *(mài Daurá, ùbangiji baushi)*, „haze of Muḥammad" *(hazoo na Mamman)*, and he is given the name Ali.[32] Nobody can doubt that the expression „owner of the white knife" must refer to the successor of the dragon-slayer, because the sword and knife of Bayajidda are part of the royal regalia.[33] Some informants consider *dàsonó* to designate a kind of axe, an opinion which finds some support in the possible derivations of this and some cognate terms having the same meaning – *base* (Igbirra), *dāši* (Songhay) and *ọ́sé* (Yoruba) – from Akkadian *pāšu* (axe).[34] Likewise the Hausa word *ùbangiji* (god), used for the king of Daura, seems to derive from *ùbaa* (father) and *gìci/gìtti* (axe).[35] In fact, the axe was the principal symbol of Baal and the weapon used by the heroic god to overcome Yam in the struggle for the cosmic kingship.[36] Concerning the name Ali given to the king of Daura, we note that *'aliy* (most high) is an epithet and an alternative name given to Baal.[37] In northwestern Hausaland the same name is applied to the founder of the Arewa dynasty who, as we shall see, was none other than the hero of Daura.[38] Since the Yoruba god and divine king Shango and the Songhay god Dongo can in turn be identified as the main god of Ugarit,[39] the identification of Bayajidda with Baal does not stand in isolation in West Africa. In a context of widespread divine kingship it is not surprising that certain divine attributes distinguish the king of Daura from a secular Islamic monarch who is no more then a representative *(khalīfa)* of God on earth.

Turning our attention to the serpent of the well of Daura, the „king in the well", we note that in a praise-song the monster is called Ba-Jimì. If we disregard the prefix of origin *ba-*, we are left with *jimì*, a root nearly identical to the West Semitic name of the sea god based on *yam* (sea, water). According to several versions of the Hausa legend the serpent of Daura was cut into seven pieces; this indication is paralleled by information provided by an Ugaritic myth in which the sea god, Yam, is equated with „the

32 Recorded from the Daktama singer Zulai Haruna and others; text checked with Alasan Abdurrahaman, Daura, 13/8/95.
33 M. G. Smith: Daura, 99, and photo following p. 29.
34 Lange: Schango, 234.
35 Abraham: *gìtá* – battle-axe (Dictionary, 327); Nicolas: *gitti* – magical axe (Dynamique, 339). According to the current explanation *ùbangiji* is derived from *giji* – „home". However this etymology does not necessarily rule out a derivation from *gìci/gìtti* without an assimilation to a neutral term a strongly coined pre-Islamic name for God could not have survived in an Islamic setting.
36 KTU 1.2 IV 11, 15, 18, 23; de Moor: Anthology, 39–41. The interpretation of *ṯmdm* as a „double-axe" makes more sense than the translation of the alternating terms *ṯmdm* and *ṯmd* „two clubs" and „club" (Gibson: Canaanite Myths, 43 f.) or just „the weapons" and „the weapon" (M. Smith: Baal Cycle, 1, 322–324, 337–342).
37 Keret epos, KTU 1.16 III 6, 8; transl. Gibson: Canaanite Myth, 98, l. 6, 8.
38 Pinult: Histoire, 91 f.
39 Lange: Schango, 227–236.

wriggling serpent, the tyrant with seven heads".[40] In the cognate Babylonian myth of creation Tiâmat, the equivalent of Yam, is said to have been cut up, so that her body constitutes the universe. In view of these comparisons, we cannot escape the conclusion that the divine being in the well of Daura is identical to the Canaanite sea god.

Finally, we should consider the Magajiya. As we shall see below, the Bori adepts of the western Hausa still worship Magajiya as one of the most important spirits of the pre-Islamic pantheon. Her name seems to be derived from *qadīšu* (the holy one), the widespread „cover name" of the Canaanite goddess Asherah,[41] with the prefix *m-*.[42] In Ugaritic mythology Asherah is the wife of El and the mother of the gods; she is also „the Great Lady who walks on the sea *(yam)*".[43] There are numerous old Syrian seals showing the weather god killing a serpent in front of a goddess.[44] Although in the Baal epic of Ugarit, 'Astarte, another important female goddess, urges the heroic god to deliver the *coup de grâce* against Yam,[45] the divinity seems to be a predecessor of Asherah. She is sometimes represented as a tree goddess.[46] In the so-called Qudšu iconography the serpent is associated with a goddess, thought to be Asherah.[47]

Another set of parallels concerns the Israelite queen mother *(gĕbîrâ)* who was „the earthly counterpart of Asherah, the king's heavenly mother".[48] Similarly the Magajiya of Daura and other Hausa kingdoms is considered to be the „official mother of the king".[49] Before the coming of Islam she most likely had priestly functions also, an assumption which, in the case of the equivalent office of the Kanuri Magira, is supported by better evidence.[50] The most prominent Magira, Aissa Kili Ngirmarma, is said to have saved her son – Mai Ali – from his powerful dynastic enemies.[51] Furthermore Aissa seems to be identical to the Kanembu ancestress Aissa Bugdarimaram (Aissa of Baghdad) and 'Ā'ishā *bint* Krm, the wife of the Kanuri dynastic ancestor Sayf b. Dhī Yazan.[52] Therefore the famous Magira would appear to have originally been the goddess Asherah who was eager to protect her divine son 'Alī (Baal) against the dangers of this world. Further, it should be noted that the term „Magira" may derive from the Hebrew term *gĕbîrâ* (queen-mother) to which was prefixed the Afroasiatic *nomen agens* forma-

40 KTU 1.3 III 39, transl. Gibson: Canaanite Myths, 50 l. 39.
41 Gese: Religionen, 152–155; Helck: Betrachtungen, 217–220.
42 The commonly proposed derivation *qdš* (inherit) > *maqaṣṣ* (Wolff: Referenzgrammatik, 126) should perhaps be modified to *qdš* (holy) > *qaddu* (inheritance) and *qdš* > *maqaṣ*.
43 N. Wyatt: Asherah, in: DDD, 183–195.
44 C. Uehlinger: Leviathan, in: DDD, 958 f.; Keel: Recht der Bilder, 212–215, 250–252.
45 Gibson: Canaanite Myth, 44; M. Smith: Baal Cycle, 1, 324.
46 Keel: Recht der Bilder, 250 fig. 232, 233.
47 R. S. Hendel: Serpent, in: DDD, 1407.
48 Ackerman: Queen mother, 400; N. Wyatt: Asherah, in: DDD, 193.
49 M. G. Smith: Daura, 123.
50 Lange: Königinmutter, 139–146.
51 For traditions concerning Aisa Kili Ngirmarma see Lange: Sudanic Chronicle, 132 f.
52 Meek: Northern Tribes, 70; Lange: Chronologie, 65 f. Note that the unnamed mother of Sayf b. Dhī Yazan is also said to be „the daughter of the king of Baghdad" (ibid.: 65).

tive *m-*. Parallel to *gĕbîrâ* we have in Hebrew *gĕbûrâ* (strength), a quality frequently attributed to Yahweh.[53] Asherah having been the consort of Baal (and of Yahweh),[54] we may assume that she was considered to be a divinity of comparable strength. *Magĕbîrâ* might therefore have been a term which in popular Hebrew or in Aramaic was assigned to the priestess of the *gĕbîrâ* (Asherah?). These comparisons lead us to suppose that the greeting of the Magajiya by the king of Daura corresponded originally to the „sacred marriage" *(hieros gamos)* of the king with a priestess who acted on behalf of the great goddess. As for Ayana, the old woman met by Bayajidda near the well, she may have been the *êntu* priestess, as suggested by her name, who played the part of the great goddess in Mesopotamian *akîtu* festival.[55] Her role could have been similar to that of the Kebbi priestess Eni (see below).

In view of these parallels, the present-day standard interpretation of the Hausa legend, according to which the rule of the king of Daura *(sarkii)* was preceded by the reign of minor queens *(sàrauniyaa)* or female chiefs *(magaajiyaa)*, should be discarded.[56] In fact, the transposition of the power from the divine but tyrannical „king in the well", Ba-jimi, to the worldly and beneficent king of Daura corresponds precisely to the shift of the divine kingship from the tyrannical sea god, Yam, to the fertility god, Baal.[57] In Canaan and in Mesopotamia the victory of the Baal over the sea god Yam, or Tiâmat, provided the mythological background for the New Year's festival. In Borno and Hausaland the festival for the Prophet's birthday is known by two traditional names, *Gàanii* and *Takutàhaa*,[58] both of which point to closely related oriental antecedents: *Gàanii* to *gn*, the fourth month of the Ugaritic spring year,[59] during which Baal's feast may have been celebrated, and *Ta-kutà-haa* to *akîtu*, the New Year's festival of many Mesopotamian cities.[60] In both festivals the king reenacted the victory of Baal over the sea god and in Mesopotamia – perhaps also in Canaan – he performed the ritual of the „sacred marriage".[61]

Under the pressure of Islam the basic institutions of the pre-Islamic religions could survive in West Africa only by adaptation to the new religion. A good example of such a survival under new conditions is offered by the Gani festivals of the Central Sudan.

53 Ps 54:3; 65:7; 66:7; 80:3; 89:14; 145:11; Isa 11:2; 33:13; Jer 16:21.
54 According to the epigraphic evidence of Khirbet el-Qôm and Kuntillet 'Ajrud, see Olyan: Asherah, 23–37; Dietrich and Loretz: „Jahwe", 77–124.
55 Von Soden, Einführung, 63; CAD, IV, 172 f.
56 M. G. Smith: Daura, 53, 56; Hogben and Kirk-Greene: Emirates, 147.
57 KTU 1.2 IV l. 32; transl. M. Smith: Baal Cycle, I, 324.
58 Bargery: Dictionary, 357, 981 f.; Abraham: Dictionary, 296, 844.
59 KTU 4.219; Gordon: Textbook, 414.
60 Another possible derivation is *tākultu* > Takutaha, *tākultu* being a cultic meal somewhat connected with the *akîtu* festival (von Soden: Handwörterbuch, III, 1309; van Driel: Cult, 164).
61 Renger: Heilige Hochzeit, in: RA, IV, 257; von Soden: Einführung, 63, 186. For the assumed ritual of the „sacred marriage" in Canaan see Engnell: Divine Kingship, 102–173 and de Moor: Anthology, 8 n. 42, 117.

If these important festivals, once celebrated in honour of Baal-like gods, could outlive the Islamic fight against polytheism at all, it is on account of their assimilation to the Prophet's birthday *(mawlūd)*. Apparently people believed that Bayajidda, Kisra and Tongo – or by whatever name they called their primordial leader – had something in common with the Prophet Muḥammad,[62] so that one feast could be merged with the other. Avoiding major disruptions, people also tried to rescue from oblivion the other divine protagonists of the festivals by transforming them into historicized legendary figures or depotentiated spirits. Priestly offices were simply secularized or abolished.

3. *The Dango festival of Kebbi*

The observer of present-day Bori rituals of Kebbi soon finds out that the most powerful pre-Islamic spirit is called Dango *(Dàngó)*. However, the insertion of this spirit into the pantheon of Kebbi is not well established. The fact that the Kabawa themselves associate the worship of Dango with the Zarma immigrants, seems rather to indicate that prior to the nineteenth century the spirit was unknown in Kebbi. This suspicion is not entirely ruled out by a written praise-song, in which the king Yusuf Mainassara (1854–1859) is called „Dango, father of Musa Kaya".[63] In view of the long-lasting alliance between the Kabawa and the Zarma, one might have suspected that even such an outstanding praise-name was a concession made by the Lekawa to their only superficially Islamized allies in their struggle against the Fulani Jihadists of Sokoto.[64] Nevertheless, the anthropological evidence for a pre-Islamic cult devoted to Dango, which was shared by the pre-Lekawa Kabawa, the Songhay, the Zarma and the Arawa, allows us to dismiss the idea of a recent and superficial transmission of Dango from the Zarma to the Kabawa. In fact, in all the towns and villages of Kebbi the faithful adepts of Dango once celebrated a New Year's festival during which the worshippers renewed their pact with the great god who assured their personal well-being, the fertility of their crops and the prosperity of their country.

Some supplementary comments on the history of Kebbi are necessary in order to explain the remarkable vitality of the Bori rituals in this part of Hausaland. In fact, Kebbi was the last great kingdom of the West African savanna to be exposed to intense Islamic influence. From here the Songhay migrated in various waves to the west up the River Niger, the last and most decisive movement of expansion dating from the beginning of the fifteenth century.[65] On the Middle Niger, the polytheistic faith of the Songhay and their language affected the Zarma, who had turned to Islam in the days

62 Lange: Schango, 226.
63 Included in the Hausa Ajami text, *Asalin Kabawa*, in the possession of Mr. Salisu Tajaddin, Argungu.
64 Alkali: Kebbi, 230–278.
65 Lange: From Mande, 293–299.

of the Almoravids.[66] In Kebbi, the advent of Islam was precipitated by the overthrow of the old Kanta dynasty following a joint military attack launched by Gao and Katsina in the second half of the fifteenth century. Until today this major event has escaped the attention of the historians because it is only referred to in a brief note in the *T. al-fattāsh*, where Sonni 'Alī is said to have sent an expedition against „Kankoy" in support of Muḥammad Korau (text: Muḥammad Kuyraw).[67] Further, taking into account the evidence of the Kebbi king lists, we note that prior to the rise of the Lailabawa and the Lekawa dynasties of Katsina, the Kanta rulers of the kingdom were pagans.[68] Although Islam was probably the main driving force behind the joint attack of Gao and Katsina, the new rulers of Kebbi certainly had to compromise with the pagan inclinations of the Kabawa from whom they adopted the pre-Islamic Kanta tradition of origin.[69] Moreover, since Muḥammad Korau himself was the first Muslim ruler of Katsina, it has to be expected that the religion which his soldiers spread together with their language among the conquered Kabawa was the old polytheistic religion of the Katsinawa with a slight veneer of Islam.

Turning now to the pre-Islamic New Year's festival of Kebbi, we note that contrary to the Gani festivals of other areas of the Central Sudan, it has not been merged with the *mawlūd*. The festival was celebrated in Argungu until 1978, when it was abandoned as a result of increasing Islamic pressure against all religious practices associated with Bori. The immediate cause for the abolishment of the festival was the construction of a primary school on the site of the great closing ceremony. Known as *gyaaràn gàrii* (putting the town in order) the festivities extended over two successive Sundays at the end of March and the beginning of April. On the first Sunday, the Bori adepts celebrated what is now generally called *shan furaa* (drinking of gruel) and on the second *shan kùbeewà* (drinking of the pumpkin).[70] They were directed by Tsohi, the titled chief of the old town, and the titled priestess called Eni. The colonial administrator, to whom we owe a brief description of the more spectacular activities which took place at these occasions, took only little note of the religious aspects of the festival.[71] In order to find out the spiritual meaning of the *gyaran gari* it is necessary to consult those Bori adepts who actively participated in the celebrations. Furthermore, we should not restrict our inquiry to the capital of Kebbi, because while some aspects of the festival

66 Lange: Almoravid expansion (in press).

67 *T. al-Fattāsh*: 46; tr. 90. The emendation of *kankoy* to *Kanta-koy* is justifiable if we consider *kankoy* to be a scribal error for *Kanta-koy*. The identification of Muḥammad Kuyraw with Muḥammad Korau stands on even better ground, because Muḥammad Korau was a contemporary of Sonni 'Alī (1465–1492) (Hunwick: Chronologies, 43–4) and because the *T. al-Fattāsh* does not say where Muḥammad Kuyraw ruled, which makes it possible to assume that he was the king of Katsina.

68 Harris: Sokoto, 232; Lange: Frühes Kebbi, 149–155.

69 Ibid. 154 f.

70 We may assume that earlier the „drinking" involved alcoholic drinks. Under the influence of Islam this practice, like many others, became more lenient.

71 Harris: Sokoto, 354–358.

may have been obliterated in Argungu – even before 1978 – they might still be practised in the villages of the hinterland. In fact, nowadays the *gyaran gari* is mainly celebrated to the west of the River Rima, in areas inhabited by Arawa, Zarma and Gobirawa.

The best witness of the great pre-Islamic festiviries of Kebbi is certainly Ēni Mai Tasa, the last priestess of the New Year's festival of Argungu. She was the main organizer of the festival, while the Magajiya, who belongs to the royal Lekawa, merely supervised the activities of her subordinates. At *shan fura* all the gods of the Bori pantheon were invited to come, but Dango was the most important invitee. Without his presence the festival could not have taken place.

The ceremony was held at an open space called Kaura near the dye pits in the northern part of the old town of Argungu. Here two holes were dug into the ground, one being filled with water into which pounded grain had been washed *(kàaarii)* and the other with a liquid preparation of pounded bulrush-millet *(gùmbaa)*. Then the gods were called one by one by their special melody played by the fiddle players *(màasuu gòogée)* and the drummers (*màasuu dùnduſà)* one by one, first Mohamman-na-Ruwa, then Hajoruwa, then Kuji, then Magajiya Jangare and all the others, including of course Dango, who came last. After having respectfully greeted Ēni and Tsohi, who sat in front of the holes, the possessed dipped their heads into either the water or the *gumba*, depending on the category of gods to which they belonged, in order to foretell the results of the next raining season. Ēni and Tsohi listened carefully to all these predictions, admonitions and injunctions, and at the end of the ceremony they announced to the participants a statement summarizing the different prophecies. Subsequently, they went to see the king to inform him about the „coming of the spirits" and about their prophecies concerning the next rains.[72]

On the following Saturday the people of Argungu prepared themselves for the second part of the festival, the *shan kubewa*. They had to pound grain and fetch water, because these activities were forbidden for everyone, including the Muslims, on Sunday. Furthermore, on Saturday night the gates of the town were closed and no stranger was allowed to come in.[73] However, an exception was made for a procession around the town led by Ēni and Mai Bori (the leader of the Bori adepts) which started from the house of Tsohi. Stops were made at certain trees and termite hills, the resting places of the different spirits. Many of the Bori adepts were possessed, most were dancing. This was not the case for Ēni, Mai Bori and the fiddle players, because their functions as organizers and musicians obliged them to keep a „cool head". It was deep in the night, close to dawn, when the procession around the town finally reached its point of departure, the house of Tsohi.

On Sunday the Bori adepts and their spectators met at a hill south of Argungu called Dan Koji.[74] Here the fiddlers, the guitarists *(màasuu moolee)* and the drummers called the spirits once more. They formed different groups scattered on and around the mountain. The spirits would only join their „horses" when these would hear their special music. Ēni and her helpers sacrificed a number of animals for the spirits, and they prepared food which was eaten by the possessed and everyone

72 Harris claims that Tsohi and Eni foretold the future themselves on the basis of what they saw in the two holes (Sokoto, 354–356).

73 Harris: Sokoto, 356–358.

74 In Birnin Kebbi, the earlier capital of Kebbi, there is a corresponding, much higher mountain called Dukku. Before 1805, when the Lekawa had to cede Birnin Kebbi to the Fulani of Sokoto, the festival probably took place on the Dukku mountain.

else who wanted to share the sacred meal with the spirits. The last spirit to come was Dango. After having appeased his hunger, he presided over the most important ceremony of *shan kubewa*: the distribution of blessed grain, a type of black millet called *tàrmaikuuwàa* kept from the last harvest for this purpose. Dango then sat on an upside-down mortar for grain *(turmii)*, holding in his left hand his two axes *(gàatarii)* and distributing with his right hand the millet, first to the people of authority, or their representatives,[75] and then to everyone elso who wanted some. At the beginning of the next raining season the peasants would mix the small quantity of millet obtained from Dango with their other grains, to ensure that their seeds would thus resist drought. Meanwhile the other spirits uttered their predictions and admonitions for the year to come, and if they foresaw calamities they would advise the Bori adepts how to forestall them. At this occasion the blood of the sacrificed animals was used as an omen. Contrary to *shan fura* the prophecies did not only concern the crops of the next harvest but the whole year to come and the destiny of the whole country. It was therefore particularly important to inform the king himself, so that he could take the appropriate measures to act in accordance with the divine messages. This was done by a „horse" of Anniya,[76] because Anniya was the main spirit of the ruling Lekawa.[77]

Similar festivals are celebrated to the west of the River Rima. At Tago there are two different feasts at the beginning of the dry season, first the „feast of the seventh month" *(wàasaan bakwài)*, then the *gyaran gari*.[78] They are both held on Sundays, but follow each other at irregular intervals.

At the *wasan bakwai* the helpers of Mai Bori prepare pounded millet with a little water making a solid paste *(gumbàa)*. Meanwhile the Mai Bori tries to become possessed by Kirai or any other „son of Dango" – Musa, Hausakwai or Beela. When the spirit is „on his head", his helpers lead him to a mortar placed upside down or to a chair and give him a pot containing the paste. In front of him there are three pots filled with water placed in a line. He then starts distributing the paste made of millet to the participants, first to the village heads and then to the others. All will keep the paste for the next planting season, when they will mix it with their own seeds in order to ensure the prosperity of their crops. When this ceremony is finished the spirit leaves his „horse" in a state of exhaustion. Mai Bori then starts drinking from the water in front of him. All other participants do the same. By this time the other spirits have finished their predictions concerning the next raining season and also possible misfortunes or natural disasters facing the people in the year to come, and they have given their advice on how to prevent them. On account of these prophecies the *wasan bakwai* is also called „festival of the end of the year" *(wàasan cikàn shèekarà)*.

At the *gyaran gari* of Tago the adepts of Bori follow a procession led by the Mai Bori once around the town. Many of the adepts of Bori are then possessed by their spirits. At the beginning and the end of the procession a meal is shared by all the participants. Without such meals, resulting from appropriate sacrifices, the spirits would not come and visit the mortals.[79]

75 Due to the progress of Islam, none of the titled officials of Kebbi, with the exception of the Bori priests, ever participated – as far as Eni remembers – in the festival.
76 Anniya is well-known in western Gobir (Sabon Birni), Kebbi, Zamfara (Krieger: Notizen, 99) and Arewa.
77 Eni complains that for a long time the king has not shown any interest in the results of these „consultations". Various interviews with Eni Jimmai Mohammed Sani, called Mai Tasa (born 1930) in November 1994 and September 1995.
78 Tago is situated 33 km west of Argungu.
79 Sarkin Bori Mai Fala, note book: Tago, 23/8/95; Malam Bakar, note book: Tago, 29/8/95.

At Feske, even further to the west of Argungu, the festival is called *Dakka na-Dàngó* (Dango's pounding) and lasts for one week.[80] Here it is the Mai Bori Sheeku who organizes the festivities which take place in January or February and which are therefore considered to be equivalent to „the opening of the bush" *(budèen daajìi)* at the beginning of the dry season.

Mai Bori starts the festival by addressing a prayer to Dango in which he requests the god to assure the well-being, the health and the sustenance of the people. Then the musicians call one by one the different spirits except for, however, Dango, who will only come on the last day of the festival. The main god of the festival, the one for whom all Bori adepts came, presides over three ceremonies, one closely following the other. Once Dango has taken possession of his „horse" he is taken by his „slaves", the *baayiin Dàngó*, to an upside-down mortar; he sits down on it holding in each hand a sacred axe *(gàatariin Dàngó)*. He first presides over an omen ceremony showing what the results of the next raining season will be. In front of him towards the east two small furrows, each having the length of two axes, have been dug crosswise in the ground according to the cardinal points. Dry grass is put into the furrows and lit. Four men standing at the four cardinal points each slaughter a hen and let the blood run into the furrows. Next they pour water into the furrows from four vessels placed at the cardinal points. At this stage others will go to the shrine of Dango in order to sacrifice – out of sight of the others – a goat for him. By then Dango is standing on the mortar, watching the omen carefully: it is believed that in the region corresponding to that side where the water stays longest, more rain will fall than in the others. Through the last ritual Dango ensures the personal well-being of individual participants by distributing medicine to them: bending forward from his mortar towards the cross-section of the furrows, he collects with his axe some ashes mixed with blood and sand and hands them over to those in need. Finally Dango takes three handfuls of this medicine and mixes it with the millet kept in a calabash. He then puts the calabash on the central point of the furrows and starts distributing its contents to the participants, first to the village-heads, whom he calls one by one, then to other Bori adepts. As in Argungu, this is done in order to ensure good crops for the next harvest. The last sacrifice for Dango in his shrine is a black male goat, which is roasted and consumed. Afterwards, the participants separate and return to their villages.[81]

The pre-Islamic New Year's festivals celebrated in a number of Kebbi towns and villages have been described at length, because they reveal the earlier central position of Dango in the ritual of the Rima-valley people. Furthermore, it should be noted that the *gyaran gari* of the Kabawa is closely related to the *yeenendi* of the Songhay in which Dango is likewise the main spirit to be exhalted. The common traits can be summarized as follows: first, the *yeenendi* (in Songhay: making fresh) is celebrated in order to appease Dongo and thus to induce him to send the rains – but it is also celebrated if the rains have already set in; second, the spirits are present at the ceremony by taking possession of their „horses"; third, the order of precedence is strictly followed, with Dongo always coming last; fourth, the priest questions the spirits about the raining season, and the spirits answer by exhorting their worshippers to be more faithful to them before

80 Feske is situated 60 km due west of Argungu, close to the border of Niger. People of Tago claim that the Feske festival extends over ten days.
81 Mai Bori Sheeku, note book: Tunga Doole, 28/8/95.

expressing their good-will with respect to the requested rains; fifth, the people also ask questions concerning their own affairs, which have nothing to do with the rains; sixth, on a hill outside the village, a rain-omen ceremony involving a vessel *(hampi)* filled with water takes place; seventh, associated with the rain-omen is a ritual which consists of the pounding of black millet, which is added into the water of the vessel; eighth, the priests touch the *hampi* with two fingers of one hand and pledge to be faithful to him (Songhay: Simiri); ninth, Dongo comes by taking possession of a priest; he holds his axe, sits down on an upside-down mortar and then presides over the rain-omen ceremony; tenth, Dongo either distributes the millet to the people (Kebbi) or he throws the pounded millet into the vessel and pours the water into a furrow dug in the ground in front of him (Songhay: Simiri); alternatively the priest places the vessel on two furrows in the ground which form a cross according to the cardinal points; Dongo takes some of the water into his mouth and makes the remaining water overflow and run into the furrows; later old straw is thrown into the furrows and lit (Songhay: Sakoyré);[82] eleventh, finally animals are sacrificed to Dango in such a way that the participants cannot see them (Simiri, Feske). It is clear from this brief comparison, that the *yeenendi* of Songhay and the *gyaran gari* of Kebbi are two closely related festivals, and that the descriptions of the different rituals complete each other.

Informants from Argungu claim that the Borgu festivals are basically the same as their own. As an example we may take the Gani festival in Nikki, during which the king is temporarily concealed in a kiosk. A week later the naming ceremony of the Wasangari princes takes place at the hand of the „official queen mother".[83] More closely related to the Kebbi festivals however is *babban tsaafi* (great worship), the main feast of Illo, which is now no longer practised. Like the *gyaran gari* of Argungu, it extended over two consecutive Sundays. On the second Sunday a ceremony called Kuti took place in which the king himself participated and which involved the sacrifice of a horse and a cock.[84] If in the surviving festivals of Kebbi and Songhay, no such participation can be shown, this is certainly due to the influence of Islam. However, in Argungu the earlier participation of the king can perhaps indirectly be inferred from the fact that the Bori adepts informed him about the interpretations of the omens and the predictions. Also, as we have seen, even the Muslim kings of Kebbi were sometimes called Dango. Similarly, we note that two great officials, the Galadima and the Kunduda, provided animals and other provisions for the great banquet of Dan Koji. Therefore it is not an unwarranted conclusion to assume that the king of Kebbi himself was once the most active performer in the great New Year's festival.

[82] The evidence for Songhay is provided by J. Rouch: Religion, 220–224, and: Rites, 1671–1687. Rouch describes in his book a ceremony which took place in Sakoyré on 25 June, 1942, and in his article a ceremony of Simiri on 23 April, 1951. In view of the above comparison the elements of the two ceremonies have been combined.

[83] Orou: Gani, 48, 52 f.; Lange: Schango, 231.

[84] Harris: Sokoto, 372.

4. Oriental parallels of the New Year's festival

In view of the more detailed reconstruction of the pre-Islamic New Year's festival of Kebbi and Songhay, it may be allowed, even at this preliminary stage, to speculate about possible Near Eastern parallels. However, it has to be noted that our knowledge of the Near Eastern New Year's festivals is very limited; we know very little about the Israelite Feast of the Tabernacles and only a little more about the Babylonian *akītu* festival. Nevertheless, some details of the *akitu* seem to be echoed in the West African ceremonies considered here. First, the name *akitu*, already suspected in the Hausa term *Takutàhaa*, is applied in Mesopotamia to a temple situated outside the city.[85] Perhaps the name is also preserved in Illo, where the final ceremony, involving the sacrifice of different animals and subsequent withdrawal of the people, is called *Kuti*.[86] Second, the king was considered to be the representative of Baal/Marduk on earth, and therefore he played the main part in the creation drama which was at the center of the *akitu* festivities (cf. Daura). He reenacted the death and resurrection of Baal (cf. Borgu).[87] Third, the festival began with a long prayer addressed to Baal (cf. Feske). Fourth, the festival ended with a climax during which, after his resurrection, Baal took his seat in the Duku, where he determined the fate of future days (cf. Feske, Argungu). The final ceremony of *gyaran gari* – involving the determation of destinies – probably took place before the *jihād* on a mountain outside the town of Birnin Kebbi called Duku. This name would seem to derive from the ceremony.[88] Fifth, the ritual of the *hieros gamos* was performed by the king and by a high priestess bearing the title *ēntu* (cf. Ēni of Argungu and Inna/Magajiya of Gobir/Daura).[89] Sixth, in Babylon Baal was led to the *akitu* house on the tenth (or eighth) day of the festival, before he was brought back to his temple on the next day.[90] The festival therefore extended over eleven days (cf. Feske, Argungu, Illo). Seventh, it included a banquet in honor of Baal and other gods (cf. Kebbi and Illo). Eighth, the *akitu* was a festival of the seed-time, although the actual planting season was later.[91] Ninth, all rulers of Mesopotamia came annually to Babylon for the *akitu* festival (cf. Daura, nomination of office holders in Daura and Korgom, naming ceremony in Nikki).[92]

Shifting our attention to the Canaanite and Israelite Feast of Tabernacles,[93] we note the following parallels: in Kebbi and in Canaan the New Year's feast took place in the

[85] According to Falkenstein the term *akitu* was first applied to the temple (*bīt akītim*) and later to the festival (Akiti-Fest, 147–8).

[86] Harris: Sokoto, 374. Also the Nupe *kun* (ritual) may derive from *akitu* (Nadel: Nupe, 14 f., 216).

[87] Meissner: Babylonien, II, 98; Labat: Royauté, 164–165.

[88] Meissner: Babylonien, II, 95–98; Pallis: Akitu, 122–127; Labat: Royauté, 166–176; 240–252; Falkenstein: Akiti-Fest, 147–182.

[89] Renger: Untersuchungen, 144 § 50; Lewis: Sargon, 38; von Soden: Einführung, 63.

[90] Meissner: Babylonien, II, 97; CAD: I, 268.

[91] Labat: Royauté, 167; Falkenstein: Akiti-Fest, 152.

[92] Pallis: Akitu, 140.

[93] Mentioned in: KTU 1.41 I. 50 f.

seventh month of the year; although in both cases it was meant to celebrate the turn of the year, the month of the feast did not correspond to the first month of the year;[94] in Nikki *Gani* is the last month of the traditional lunar year[95] which corresponds now to the Rabī' I of the Muslim calendar; in Ugarit *gn* is either the fourth or a later month of the spring lunar year and perhaps the last month of the autumnal year[96] (most of the pre-Assyrian month names are unknown in Israel); according to the Israelite solar calender, the feast was always celebrated on the same day;[97] the Feast of Tabernacles extended over seven days;[98] the first and the last day were marked by symbolic cessation of all activities and by burnt offerings;[99] in Ugarit sacrificial meals were organized on Mount Saphon;[100] in Jerusalem the feast was celebrated in the precincts of the temple,[101] while burnt sacrifices were offered on the sacred rock *(qubbat aṣ-ṣakhra)*,[102] but there was also a place of sacrifice near the entrance of the temple;[103] associated with the feast was a ceremony of water-pouring requesting from Yahweh autumnal rains;[104] many authors are convinced that the main purpose of the Canaanite New Year's feast was to celebrate the return of Baal from the underworld, where he stayed after his defeat by Mot (cf. Feske and Argungu: the arrival of Dango on the last day);[105] other authors stipulate that the Israelites celebrated the Feast of Tabernacles in order to renew the covenant with Yahweh (cf. Songhay-Simiri).[106]

The comparison between certain details of the Baal epic of Ugarit and the rituals of the New Year's festival observed in West Africa reveals another set of parallels.

Baal is victorious against Yam with the help of double-axes *(gmd)* which Kōshar-wa-Khasīs had forged for him. Subsequently Baal sits on the throne of his kingdom *(ytbb b'l l kst mlkh)*, and he is acclaimed as „mightiest Baal is our king" *(mlkn alyn b'l)*.[107] The same event gives rise to the comment: „Yam is indeed dead! Baal shall be king!" *(ym l mt b'lm ymlk)*.[108] But Yam is not only defeated and killed, he is also cut into pieces and thrown away. This instance is recorded in two different versions. Once it is Anat who „seized him (in this case Mot), split his body with a sword *(b ḫrb tbq'nn)*, winnowed him with a sieve *(b khkhr tdry nn)*, burnt him with fire *(b il't tśrpnn)*, ground him with mill-stones *(b rḥm tṯḥnn)*, scattered him in a field *(b šd tdr' nn)*, so that his flesh

94 K. Jarol: Kalender, in: NBL, II, 432.
95 Orou: Gani, 19 f.; A. Martius (Frobenius): Borgu-Stämme, f. 44.
96 Gordon: Textbook, 414.
97 Ibid. 432.
98 Deut 16:13–15; Lev 23:33–36; Num 29:12–37.
99 Lev 23:36–7; Num 29:12–13.
100 Loretz: Ugarit, 75.
101 Neh 8:16.
102 H. P. Rüger: Jerusalem, in: BHH, 1941.
103 Exod 40:29.
104 1 Sam 7:6; Zech 14:7; A. Angerstorfer: Laubhüttenfest, in: NBL, 592.
105 Lorentz: Ugarit, 75.
106 F. C. Fensham: Covenant, in: NBD, 240.
107 KTU 1.6 V 5; KTU 1.3. V 32; transl. Gibson: Canaanite Myths, 79, l. 5; 54, l. 40.
108 KTU 1.2 IV 32; transl. Gibson: Canaanite Myths, 45, l. 32; M. Smith: Baal Cycle, I, 324.

was indeed eaten by the birds and his limbs consumed by the sparrows".[109] In another instance Yam himself complains after his defeat: „Because of you, Baal, I have suffered abasement, because of you I have suffered splitting with the sword *(dry b ḫrb)*, because of you I have suffered burning with fire *(ṯrp b išt)*, because of you I have suffered grinding with mill-stones *(ṯḥn b rḥm)*, because of you I have suffered winnowing with the riddle *(dry b kbrt)*, because of you I have suffered wilting in the fields *(b ỉdm)*, because of you I have suffered scattering in the sea".[110]

Various scholars have pointed out that Yam and Mot had suffered the same treatment in the context of the same cultic situation.[111]

The evidence from Ugarit is echoed in the following Levitical prescription, which some authors have related to the New Year's festival celebration of the renewal of Baal's power:

„If you bring a grain offering of firstfruits to the Lord, offer crushed heads of new grain roasted in the fire.[112] Put oil and incense on it; it is a grain offering. The priest shall burn the memorial portion of the crushed grain and the oil, together with all the incense, as an offering made to the Lord by fire."[113]

It is hard to believe that the precise and clearly depicted tortures inflicted on Yam/Mot, which were later integrated into the Levitical code, were only transmitted in the form of mythical tales. In fact, the final ritual of the West African Dango feast involves the same acts: the pounding of grain (to produce the paste of *gumbe*), the burning of straw, the distribution of the paste, the mixing of the paste with seeds and the throwing of the paste into the fields during the act of sowing. It is difficult to escape the conclusion that we are faced in these instances with the same sort of cult ritual which must have formed the ritual basis of the Baal cycle. In West Africa the main performer was in pre-Islamic times the king himself, who, possessed by Dango, had ceased to be a human being. In Canaan the situation might have been similar: if the king was in this case also possessed, he might have ceased to be a human being by becoming the reincarnation of Baal. Hence, it is perhaps not too daring to suggest that the much disputed Ugaritic proclamation „mightiest Baal is our king" and its biblical equivalent „Yahweh has become king" *(yahwē mlk)*,[114] do not only refer to theological speculations, but also to a concrete cultic situation during which Baal manifested himself through the king.

109 KTU 1.6 II 30–37; transl. Gibson: Canaanite Myths, 77, ll. 30–37.
110 KTU 1.6 V 11–19; transl. Gibson: Canaanite Myths, 79, ll. 11–19 and de Moor: Anthology, 95.
111 Bordreuil: Recherches, 17–30; J. F. Healey: Mot, in: DDD, 1124–1128.
112 Instead of „crushed heads of new grain" the translation should read more precisely „semolina (grīṣē) of new grain'.
113 Lev 2:14–16
114 KTU 1.101: 1–4; KTU 1.10 III 11–14; KTU 1.4 IV 43; transl. de Moor: Anthology, 1, 115, Gibson: Canaanite Myths, 60, l. 43; Ps 47:9; 93:1; 96:10; 97:1; 99:1; cf. Loretz: Thronbesteigungspsalmen.

5. The Bori pantheon and the legendary ancestors of the Hausa

In spite of the considerable influence of Islam on Hausa society, the Bori religion was able to survive until the present day because Islam recognizes the existence of spirits. Within Islam the Bori adepts are free to practise their possession rites, provided they have given up the shrines of their former gods and the public sacrifices for them. However, as has been noted, an important aspect of the Bori religion was divine kingship; therefore, the adoption of Islam by the Hausa kings must have deeply affected the main cult rituals of the old religion. Although some important polytheistic concepts could survive Islamic penetration in a demythologised form (cf. Daura), others were entirely wiped out.

In view of the fundamental opposition between the old religion of the Hausa and Islam, it is surprising that most of the studies of Bori deal with kingdoms whose Hausa dynasties were overthrown at the beginning of the nineteenth century by the Jihādists of Sokoto (Kano, Katsina and Zaria). Moreover, even research conducted in societies which could remain independent from Sokoto suffers from an anthropological bias: most often we are confronted with monographs which only provide us with descriptive data pertaining to local phenomena. At best they offer some symbolic or functional interpretation. No attempt has been made to reconstruct the earlier religious situation, involving a divine king, a great priestess and many minor officials having priestly and secular functions. Most researchers assumed that Islam was the driving force which directly or indirectly led to the emergence of states in Hausaland. In fact, it can be shown that none of the great institutions of the Hausa state is based on Islamic models, all had to be desacralized in one way or another in order to conform with the principles of Islam.

A similar process of secularization must have been at work to give rise to the present form of the Hausa tradition. As a result earlier gods and goddesses are now remembered as historical heroes. Having incorporated a number of figures which are reminiscent of the Daura tradition, the Hausa king lists provide some examples. In the long list of Gobir kings we find in the first seven positions the following names: Kan'āna, Lamarūdhu (Nimrod), Magājiya Raqiyya, Abāwa Jibda and Bāwu na-Turmi (Bawo of the mortar), Sanākāfū, Gūbiru.[115] The long list of Kebbi begins with Baram-Baram and continues with Argūji, Tabārē, Zartay and Gūbarā.[116] The official list of Zamfara has at the beginning Bakukuru, Bakara, Gimshiki, Argoje;[117] but another list has Dakka,

[115] List of Dan Akali, Tsibiri, court historian; similar: Hama, Histoire du Gobir, 28. Perhaps the first four names correspond to a loan from an early version of the Daura legend, because the long Gobir king list obtained in Sabon Birni has at the beginning: Bana Turmi, Gubur, Sanakafo (Hogben and Kirk-Greene: Emirates, 415).
[116] Mischlich: Beiträge, 163, 196; Sölken: Geschichte, 132, 138. The list published by Harris begins with 'Uthmān b. Mas'ūd – an obvious loan from the *sira* (Sokoto, 231).
[117] Krieger: Geschichte, 24–26.

followed by four names, and in the sixth position Algoje, then Bakukuru.[118] According to various Zamfara sources Argoje was a queen.[119] Clearly, Magājiya Raqiyya of the Gobir list corresponds to the Magajiya of the Daura legend, on account of her name and her position before Abāwa Jibda (Bayajidda) and Bāwu (Bawo). The only „queen" of the Kebbi and Zamfara lists is Algoje. This fact and the similarity of her name with Algade/Algaji, the epithet of the spirit Magajiya (see below), makes it very likely that the „queen" of the king lists was none other than the „queen" of Daura mentioned in the Hausa legend.[120]

For Arewa, which is north of Kebbi and west of Gobir, we have no written king list. But in this case present social distinctions, backed up by oral traditions, suggest that there were three different groups of immigrants. If we are to believe the standard anthropological interpretation, the groups arrived in three successive waves: first came the Sarauniya (queen) who, having left Daura, settled at Lugu; next arrived the Baura, who was a blacksmith of apparently unknown origin settling at Bagaji; finally there are the ruling Arewa, who claim to be the descendants of the Bornoan prince Ali (or Ari, hence „Arewa") and a local princess, although the prince left the country even before his son was born.[121] While no dates are provided for the first two waves of immigration, it is generally believed that the Bornoan prince Ali lived in the seventeenth century.[122] In fact, in Arewa we are most likely dealing with the same legendary figures as in the Daura tradition which – as we have seen – belong to the realm of myth, not to history:[123] the Sarauniya is identical to Magajiya; Ali is the same as Bayajidda, as is apparent from the Daura praise-songs mentioned above, and Baura apparently corresponds to Bawo, the proper ancestor of the Hausa.[124] The fact that Borno figures prominently as the origin of Ali should not surprise us, because the same is true for Bayajidda: Kanem-Borno was an old, powerful state, and its location on the way to the Orient made it an ideal halting place for the hero of the Hausa legend.

But if it is true that the legendary figures of the Hausa tradition are historicized gods and goddesses, one would expect to find them in one form or another among the Bori spirits who are the last remnants of the pre-Islamic religion of Hausaland. Tolerated

[118] Hogben and Kirk-Greene: Emirates, 415. With respect to Dakka, it should be noted that *dk* is perhaps an epithet of Baal (KTU 1.6 V 3; transl. Gibson: Canaanite Myth, 79 l. 3).
[119] Krieger: Geschichte, 26 f.; Hogben und Kirk-Greene: Emirates, 415.
[120] Hence it may be supposed that the third „queen" of Hausaland mentioned by oral traditions, Amina of Zaria (Kano Chronicle, in: Palmer: Memoirs, III, 109; Arnett: Hausa, 161), is also identical with a Canaanite goddess (Anat?).
[121] Piault: Histoire, 49, 71, 91; Lange: Hausa-Traditionen, 57 f.
[122] Landeroin: Notice, 494; Piault: Histoire, 52.
[123] The exchange of gifts which is supposed to have taken place between Arewa and Borno before the *jihād* (Landeroin: Notice, 495) does not confer to the legend the character of a historical source providing information on real events.
[124] Although Piault recognized that the Arewa legend is cognate to the Daura legend (Histoire, 92 n. 60), he dissociates according to his stratification model between the Sarauniya, Baura and Ali/Ari by suggesting that each of them was the leader of a wave of immigrants.

by Islam, these former gods are still worshipped all over Hausaland during possession ceremonies: the Bori priests and musicians call the spirits by singing their praise-songs and playing their music; then the spirits take possession of their mediums or „horses" and act and speak through them. Besides the corpus of the sometimes very elaborate praise-songs, the Bori liturgy, the Bori priests remember some rudimentary myths; they know the behaviour of the different spirits, and they are able to classify them by groups and indicate their family relationships. Because no comparative study of the Bori pantheons, which differ considerably from one Hausa state to another, has yet been attempted,[125] we have to base our investigation on the few regional studies which are available and on our own field notes for western Hausaland.[126]

a. Magajiya – Asherah

Magajiya is called by the western Hausa Magajiya Jangare, Magajiya Algaje, Algade Magajiya, Gaida, na-Gode or simply Magajiya;[127] she is unknown to the Bori adepts of eastern Hausaland. But is the spirit Magajiya really identical to the legendary figure of the queen of Daura, and if she is, does the spirit correspond to the Canaanite goddess Asherah? There are a number of arguments in favour of these identifications.

First, in Katsina, Gobir and Kebbi, the Bori adepts consider Magajiya to be the mother of Daudu (David), Sarkin Rafi (Ibrāhīm/Abraham) and a spirit called Bawa. As we shall see below, Bawa is identical to Bawo; therefore, Magajiya should be identical to the legendary queen of Daura.

Second, according to myths told in Kebbi, Magajiya had a co-wife called Gulma or Bagulma, who was a slave. In Kano, where Magajiya is called Sarauniya, Magajiya's co-wife is called Bagwariya (see below).[128] This information provided by Hausa myths is echoed in the Daura legend, where Magajiya gives to Bayajidda her handmaid Bagwariya as a concubine. A parallel can be found in a theogonic text from Ugarit, where a handmaid of Asherah engenders with El some monsters.[129] Being slaves and therefore foreign, Bagulma and Bagwariya do not speak Hausa; their offspring are non-Hausa. Accordingly Karbagari, the son of Bagwariya, became the ancestor of the *banza bakwai* who are not Hausa. Also it should be noted that in Songhay *gurma*

125 Frobenius was probably right to see Bori in connection with a widespread „religion of possession" shared in West Africa by the Hausa, the Songhay and the Yoruba. However he was mistaken to locate the origin of this religion in Persia (Und Afrika, III, 248, 271). According to Tremearne, the religion of Bori spread from North Africa across the Sahara (Ban, 392–426).

126 Frobenius: Dämonen, 294–369; Greenberg: Influence; King: Bòorîi (1966); id., Bòorîi (1967) 105–125; Krieger: Notizen, 96–120; Reuke: Maguzawa, 126–132; Erlmann and Magagi: Girkaa.

127 Magajiya Jangare and Magajiya Algade (or Algade Magajiya) are names known in Kebbi and Gobir (Sabon Birni); in Katsina Magajiya is referred to as Magajiya Algaje and Gaida (King: Bòorîi [1967] 49, 91), in Kebbi, Argungu and Kamba, as na-Gado and in Gobir also as Godia (Sabon Birni).

128 Greenberg: Influence, 37 f.; Tremearne: Ban, 389 (Arzikki Boboniya [= Bagwariya] is the wife of Malam Alhaji [= Bayajidda]).

129 KTU 1.12 16–29; transl. de Moor: Anthology, 130.

designates the right bank of the River Niger in contradistinction to *hausa*, the left bank. Without doubt we are faced here again with an opposition between „their own" (and good) *(hausa)* and the „foreign" (and bad) *(gurma)*.

Third, in Kano, where we find no spirit Magajiya, Bori adepts worship a spirit called Sarauniya (queen). Just as Magajiya elsewhere, she is the mother of Dan Galadima (Daudu) and the co-wife of Bagwariya who, like Gulma/Bagulma, is a concubine of her husband.[130] The identity between the legendary and the mythological figure can be accepted, because the same Bori spirit is called by the two names of the legendary queen of Daura, „queen" *(sarauniyaa)* and „Magajiya".

Fourth, the name Magajiya Jangare refers to Jangare the „city of the spirits" lying in the east.[131] On account of this epithet, it may be supposed that Magajiya Jangare was thought to hold the office of Magajiya in the city of the spirits; therefore, she must have been the most prominent female spirit. Again, the Magajiya of Daura, who is considered to be a reincarnation of the legendary queen of Daura, also holds this office, which theoretically gives her power over all women. Some Bori adepts see in Magajiya the elder sister of Jangare (Sarkin Aljan).[132]

Fifth, the epithet Algade/Algaje/na-Gode can be recognized in Argūji/Algoje, the „queen" who figures prominently in the king lists of Kebbi and Zamfara. On account of her sex and her position on top of the king lists, she seems to be identical to Magājiyya Raqiyya, the third figure on the long list of Gobir. Further, the close resemblance of the two names shows that the „queen" of the king lists is in fact identical to the spirit Magajiya Algade. We may suppose that the same transformation of a mythological Magajiya into a „historical" Magajiya took place in Daura.

Sixth, just as the Kanuri term Magira seems to derive from Hebrew *gĕbîrâ* (queen mother), Magajiya seems to derive from Hebrew *qadîš* (the holy one), the „cover name" of Asherah. In both cases the root has been prefixed by the Afroasiatic *nomen agens* formative. Hence, on linguistic grounds the root should refer to the goddess and the prefixed term to the priestess – or in masculine to the priest (Magaji). But since the name of an office has been transferred to the name of a goddess, it is perhaps not quite correct to assert, in the case of the Magajiya of Daura, that a mythological figure became a legendary figure. Nevertheless, in spite of this shift of a name from an office to a divinity, the identity of the goddess herself was probably not affected by the new name given to her.

Seventh, while the term Magajiya originally designated the priestess of Asherah, the parallel term Inna, which in Gobir is applied to the same priestly office,[133] was apparently first the name of a goddess, as can be judged from the Hausa spirit Inna (Bafillata)

130 Greenberg: Influence, 37 f.

131 Tremearne: Ban, 255 f.; Frobenius: Dämonen, 315, 347–350; Greenberg: Influence, 28 f. Jangare may be cognate with Songhay *jingari/jingiri* (prayer). In Timbuktu: *jingeré* – mosque (Barth: Travels, III, 326).

132 Frobenius: Dämonen, 351.

133 Nicolas: Dynamique, 151 f., 340 f.; Lange: Königinmutter, 144 f.

and the Sumerian name Inanna for Ishtar.[134] It would seem that, in this case, it was the Mesopotamian *en* priestess who was designated by the name of the goddess Inanna. As we have seen above, there are reasons to believe that the Canaanite *gĕbîrâ* was, like the *ēntu* priestess, involved in the ritual of the „holy marriage".[135] Parallel to the Inna of Gobir, the legendary Ayana of Daura and the priestess Eni of Argungu may owe their status and their name to the ancient *ēntu* priestess of Ishtar.

Eighth, the Bori adepts of Gobir often call Magajiya by the name Aisha,[136] which, derived from Arabic ʿĀ'ishā, is equivalent to Kanuri Aissa. As has been shown above, the Kanuri legendary figure Aissa Kili Ngirmarma seems to be identical to Asherah. It would therefore appear that the West Semitic name Asherah was rendered by the Muslims of the Central Sudan as ʿĀ'ishā and names derived from it. Since Magajiya is a name derived from a priestly office, Aisha, Aissa and Algade/Algaje seem to be more correct names for the great goddess of the Canaanite pantheon.

Ninth, the Bori adepts of Katsina and probably also those of Kano call Magajiya by the epithet *uwam mutàanee* – „mother of men".[137] This would seem to reflect the particular status of Asherah as mother of the minor gods of the pantheon, the „seventy sons of Asherah", which are also referred to as „the sons of Qudšu".[138] In comparison, the offspring of the legendary Magajiya is restricted to Bawo and his sons. However, this contrasts with Magajiya's epithet *uwam mutàance* and the information of the Bori adepts of western Hausaland, according to which Magajiya was the mother of both Bawa (= Bawo) and Sarkin Rafi (= Ibrāhīm/Biram).[139]

In the light of the elements presented above, it would appear that the legendary figure of Magajiya has a number of traits in common with the mythological Magajiya who, in turn, is identical to Asherah. However, by distinguishing between the Bornoan Magira and the Magajiya of Daura, the Hausa legend differs from the available myths, although by classifying Biram (Abraham) among the *Hausa bakwai* it clearly builds on the Bori tale of Magajiya, where Abraham is called Sarkin Rafi. It would therefore seem that according to this tale Biram and Bawo were engendered by the same father and mother. A similar result can be obtained if one considers the parallel etymologies of Magajiya and Magira: Magira who is the same as Magajiya is separated from the latter by Bagulma/Bagwariya, the slave concubine and mother of Karbagari. Thereby we arrive at the preliminary conclusion that the Hausa legend uses preexisting myths but then reshapes them in order to express historical realities.

134 Greenberg: Influence, 31, 39 f. Among the western Hausa, Inna is known as Bafillata and Hajoruwa.
135 See n. 60.
136 A'i Kwotorkoshi, field notes: Sabon Birni, 31/8/95.
137 King: Bòorîi (1966) 115 n. 6. Tremearne has *uwal yara* – „mother of children" (Ban, 301); Frobenius hesitates between „mother of the Bori people" and „mother of the Bori spirits" (Dämonen, 355).
138 KTU 1.4 VI 46; 1.2 I 21; transl. de Moor: Anthology, 60 l. 46; 32 l. 21.
139 A'i Kwotorkoshi, field notes: Sabon Birni, 31/8/95 (*praise-song – hilmarli*); Eni, field notes: Argungu, 1/9/95; s. a. King: Bòorîi (1967) 91.

b. Bayajidda – *b'l zbl arṣ*

Next we have to deal with Bayajidda, the dragon-slayer and the acclaimed ancestor of the kings of Daura. Is he also to be found in the pantheon of the Hausa people? He is, but not in the form one may have expected. In fact, the name Bayajidda is not the only one by which the dragon-slayer is known. In the *K. mulūk Dawra* the hero is first called Abū Yazabad, then consistendy Abū Yazīd. In the Gobir king list his name is Abāwa Jibda, in Katsina and in Korgom his name is pronounced Abajida. It is only in a late footnote of the Kano Chronicle that we find the name Bayajida (transl.: Bayajidda).[140] Colonial authors and modern schools have contributed to impose this form. The name may be interpreted as a distortion of a frequent epithet of Baal, *b'l* (lord) *zbl* (prince) *arṣ* (earth), which appears in the Ugaritic texts as *zbl b'l arṣ* and in the Bible in the corrupted form Baal-Zebub:[141] *b.a* for *b'l* (on the basis of the Aramaic form *baʿlā*), *jljib* for *zbl* (*z* is in Hausa often palatalized), *d* for *arṣ* (*ṣ* is in Hausa realized either as *l* or *d*). It should be noticed that the Hausa form, Bayajidda, by the sequence of the words more closely echoes the biblical Baal-Zebub than the Ugaritic *zbl b'l arṣ*. The most common epithet of Jahwe figuring in the Bible, *ṣĕbāʾôṯ* (God of hosts), could perhaps be based on the same epithet.[142] In view of the great importance accorded in Daura to the slaying of the dragon, it is perhaps not surprising that the hero from the east was known by a name which distinguished him from all other Baals by the honorific title „king of the earth" *(b'l zbl arṣ)*.

Bayajidda is unknown in other parts of Hausaland. In his stead the people of Gobir remember Mohamman-Mai-Gitti (Muḥammad the owner of the axe), who is said to have lead the Gobirawa from Arabia to West Africa.[143] According to another version of the tradition, Mohamman-Mai-Gitti was the last son of the queen Tawa who was the wife of Sharīf and the sister of Raffi. After his eleven brothers had perished in fights against the Tuaregs, he led the Gobirawa south and established the kingdom of Gobir in the present territory.[144] But the Gobir traditions insist particularly on the miraculous death of Mohamman-Mai-Gitti: having been deprived of his „medicine", the *gĩci/gĩtti* (axe), the hero hit the ground with a violent stroke of his sword; the ground opened and he disappeared into the earth together with his troops.[145] The two great figures of the Gobir legends, Tawa and Mohamman-Mai-Gitti, can be identified with the help of the related minor figures, Raffi and Sharīf: the first is certainly identical to Sarkin Rafi (Abraham), and the second would appear to be the same as El, who was probably

140 Palmer: Kano Chronicle, in: Palmer: Memoirs, III, 64 n. 1.
141 KTU 1.3 I 1–4; KTU 1.5 VI 10; Gibson: Canaanite Myths, 46, ll. 3 f.; 73, l. 10; 2 Kgs 1:2–16.
142 Cf. A. S. van der Woude: Ṣĕbāʾôṯ, in: THAT, II, 505–507.
143 Villomé: Monographie, f. 15.
144 Nicolas: Question, 15 f.; Hama: Histoire, 54 f.
145 Landeroin: Notice, 470 f.; Kurmshi, field notes: Tsofon Birni, 11/1/85.

the consort of Asherah.[146] Hence Tawa should be Asherah and Mohamman-Mai-Gitti should be Baal. Three further arguments may be brought forward in favour of an identification of the Gobir hero with Baal: Muḥammad seems generally to have been the most favoured name given in the Islamic period to Baal, just like the Gani festival was interpreted as the *mawlid al-nabī*; the axe or the double-axe *(ṣmd)* was the sacred weapon of Baal; the periodic disappearance of Baal, his stay in the underworld and his resurrection were basic tenents of the Canaanite religion of fertility.[147] These mythological events, originally related to the raining season, were also reenacted during the Gani festival.

A more obvious equivalent of Bayajidda is the Arewa-founding hero Ali. Like Bayajidda he came from Borno; like Bayajidda he had some connection with Daura, and again like Bayajidda he found the other figures already established on the spot.[148] In the Daura praise-songs for the Magajiya and for the wives of the king, Bayajidda is referred to as Ali.[149] On the other hand, we note that the most common composite designation of Baal is *'aliyn b'l* (mightiest Baal).[150] Sometimes Baal is solely referred to as *'aliy* (most high).[151] In the pantheon of the western Hausa, we find that one of the most prominent spirits is called Ali Aliyu. By his devices this spirit is singled out as somebody who is equal to God and the Prophet: „Allah I follow and you, the Prophet I follow and you."[152] He is also highly respected as the husband of the beautiful and spoiled Miriam.[153] Identical to Mai Sambo, he is in Zamfara the only spirit who owns an axe with a bell.[154] In Kebbi he holds in one hand an axe and in the other a walking stick.[155] These characteristics, widely recognized among the western Hausa, and his name, modelled on *'aliy 'aliyn* (most high, mightiest), make Ali Aliyu a good candidate for a Hausa divinity derived from Baal. He is certainly not related to the Prophet's cousin and son-in-law 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib.

Further we should note that several Bori spirits exhibit characteristics similar to those of the ancestral figure Bayajidda. Rakau-na-Gaya of the Gobir pantheon is the husband of Magajiya and of Anniya-Zakuma, the first being the mother of Bagobiri-Bawa,

146 N. Wyatt: Asherah, in: DDD, 184. Asherah was certainly the wife of Elkunirša *('lqn 'rṯ)* (Gese: Religionen, 114).
147 M. H. Pope: Baal-Hadad, in: WM, 261–263.
148 Piault: Histoire, 91–94.
149 The Magajiya and the noble wives of the king are praised as *ta Ali* („related" to Ali).
150 KTU 1.1 IV 22; KTU 1.2 I 4; KTU 1.3 I 2; KTU 1.4 II 22; transl. Gibson: Canaanite Myths, 39, l. 22; 40, l. 4; 46, l. 2; 57, l. 22. Virolleaud, the discoverer of the Baal tablets, called the heroic god Aleïn-Baal (Nouveau chant, 113).
151 Keret epos, KTU 1.16 III 6, 8; transl. Gibson, Canaanite Myths, 98, l. 6, 8. Ps. 97:9 (For you, O Lord, are the Most High over all the earth; you are exalted far above all gods). In the Bible we find the title *'aliy* applied to Yahweh among others in Deut 33:12 and Hos 7:16.
152 Eni, field notes: Argungu, 9/11/94; Fati, field notes: Kamba, 27/8/95.
153 Ibid. and King: Bòorii (1967), 23, 65.
154 Krieger: Notizen, 106, 117.
155 Eni, field notes: Argungu, 22/8/95.

Dan-Galadima-Bori (Daudu/David) and Sarkin Rafi (Ibrāhīm/Abraham) and the ancestress of the Hausa, and the second the mother of the Beibei (Gwari, Gurma) and the ancestress of the *banza bakwai*.[156] In Kebbi the Bori adepts consider Kure to be the husband of Magajiya, Doguwa (Inna) and Bagulma and the father of Bawa, Dan-Galadima (with Magajiya) and the Bobayi (with Bagulma).[157] In Zamfara they think that Galadima was the husband of Magajiya, their children being Dan Galadima and Bawa/Wanzami. Here Rakau and Jangare are other names for Galadima.[158] In Kano they believe that Sarauniya (queen) is the wife of Malam Alhaji and the mother of Dan Galadima, Bagobiri being the slave of Dan Galadima, while Bagwariya is the concubine of Malam Alhaji.[159] In Gobir Malam Ali is alternative name for Malam Alhaji (the pilgrim).[160] It is obvious that Rakau, Kure, Galadima and Malam Alhaji (Malam Ali) are closely related, if not identical figures. On the basis of information collected among the Hausa of Tunis, it is possible to go one step further. Here the husband of Magajiya is called Malam Ali Geshe (from Hebrew *gešem* – rain?), Sarkin Fushi (king of wrath) and Sidi Ali, and in his praise-song he is specifically stated to be a „conqueror" and to be somebody who hurts the woman (*godiya* = Magajiya).[161] Besides the name Ali, there is his rage, his conquering ability, his power over rain *(gešem?)* and the violence used against Godiya/Magajiya which make the god look like a foreign Baal who conquered the land of Asherah.

In Kebbi the Bori adepts tell a story which could refer to a usurpation of power. It is the only story told with respect to the former gods. It deals with the two wives of Kure, Magajiya and Doguwa; the slave concubine of Kure, Bagulma; and his son Bawa, Daudu or Mohamman. Although the mother of this boy was Bagulma, Magajiya took the boy away from her and gave him to her elder sister Doguwa for breast-feeding. When Bagulma discovered that her boy had been stolen by Magajiya, she did not dare to claim him back because she was a slave. When Magajiya in turn asked her elder sister to return the boy to her, the latter refused.[162] This story should be compared to the tale of the Bori adepts of Sabon Birni (Gobir) referring to the quarrels between Rakau and his wife Magajiya about the ownership of their children.[163] In Gorin Dikko (central Kebbi) the Bori priestess sings a praise-song for Sarauniya-Anniya which mentions that Sarauniya (queen) killed the son of her co-wife, who is not mentioned by name (Magajiya?).[164] In view of the fact that the Bori adepts of Sabon Birni (Gobir) consider

156 With respect to the spirits this information was provided by A'i Kwotorkoshi and others, field notes: Sabon Birni, 31/8/95 (praise-song – *kirari*).
157 Eni, field notes: Argungu, 1/9/95.
158 Krieger: Notizen, 101, 107–109.
159 Greenberg: Influence, 37 f.
160 Nicolas: Dynamique, 314.
161 Tremearne: Ban, 306 f.
162 Eni, field notes: Argungu, 1/9/95; Hawa'u Dodo, field notes: Sawwa, 1/9/95.
163 A'i Kwotorkoshi, field notes: Sabon Birni, 31/8/95.
164 Kumba Narba, field notes: Gorin Dikko, 29/8/95.

the consort of Asherah.[146] Hence Tawa should be Asherah and Mohamman-Mai-Gitti should be Baal. Three further arguments may be brought forward in favour of an identification of the Gobir hero with Baal: Muḥammad seems generally to have been the most favoured name given in the Islamic period to Baal, just like the Gani festival was interpreted as the *mawlid al-nabī*; the axe or the double-axe *(ṣmd)* was the sacred weapon of Baal; the periodic disappearance of Baal, his stay in the underworld and his resurrection were basic tenents of the Canaanite religion of fertility.[147] These mythological events, originally related to the raining season, were also reenacted during the Gani festival.

A more obvious equivalent of Bayajidda is the Arewa-founding hero Ali. Like Bayajidda he came from Borno; like Bayajidda he had some connection with Daura, and again like Bayajidda he found the other figures already established on the spot.[148] In the Daura praise-songs for the Magajiya and for the wives of the king, Bayajidda is referred to as Ali.[149] On the other hand, we note that the most common composite designation of Baal is *'aliyn b'l* (mightiest Baal).[150] Sometimes Baal is solely referred to as *'aliy* (most high).[151] In the pantheon of the western Hausa, we find that one of the most prominent spirits is called Ali Aliyu. By his devices this spirit is singled out as somebody who is equal to God and the Prophet: „Allah I follow and you, the Prophet I follow and you."[152] He is also highly respected as the husband of the beautiful and spoiled Miriam.[153] Identical to Mai Sambo, he is in Zamfara the only spirit who owns an axe with a bell.[154] In Kebbi he holds in one hand an axe and in the other a walking stick.[155] These characteristics, widely recognized among the western Hausa, and his name, modelled on *'aliy 'aliyn* (most high, mightiest), make Ali Aliyu a good candidate for a Hausa divinity derived from Baal. He is certainly not related to the Prophet's cousin and son-in-law ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib.

Further we should note that several Bori spirits exhibit characteristics similar to those of the ancestral figure Bayajidda. Rakau-na-Gaya of the Gobir pantheon is the husband of Magajiya and of Anniya-Zakuma, the first being the mother of Bagobiri-Bawa,

146 N. Wyatt: Asherah, in: DDD, 184. Asherah was certainly the wife of Elkunirša *(ʾlqn ʾrṯ)* (Gese: Religionen, 114).
147 M. H. Pope: Baal-Hadad, in: WM, 261–263.
148 Piault: Histoire, 91–94.
149 The Magajiya and the noble wives of the king are praised as *sa Ali* („related" to Ali).
150 KTU 1.1 IV 22; KTU 1.2 I 4; KTU 1.3 I 2; KTU 1.4 II 22; transl. Gibson: Canaanite Myths, 39, l. 22; 40, l. 4; 46, l. 2; 57, l. 22. Virolleaud, the discoverer of the Baal tablets, called the heroic god Aleïn-Baal (Nouveau chant, 113).
151 Keret epos, KTU 1.16 III 6, 8; transl. Gibson, Canaanite Myths, 98, l. 6, 8. Ps. 97:9 (For you, O Lord, are the Most High over all the earth; you are exalted far above all gods). In the Bible we find the title *'aliy* applied to Yahweh among others in Deut 33:12 and Hos 7:16.
152 Eni, field notes: Argungu, 9/11/94; Fati, field notes: Kamba, 27/8/95.
153 Ibid. and King: Bòorii (1967), 23, 65.
154 Krieger: Notizen, 106, 117.
155 Eni, field notes: Argungu, 22/8/95.

Dan-Galadima-Bori (Daudu/David) and Sarkin Rafi (Ibrāhīm/Abraham) and the ancestress of the Hausa, and the second the mother of the Beibei (Gwari, Gurma) and the ancestress of the *banza bakwai*.[156] In Kebbi the Bori adepts consider Kure to be the husband of Magajiya, Doguwa (Inna) and Bagulma and the father of Bawa, Dan-Galadima (with Magajiya) and the Bobayi (with Bagulma).[157] In Zamfara they think that Galadima was the husband of Magajiya, their children being Dan Galadima and Bawa/Wanzami. Here Rakau and Jangare are other names for Galadima.[158] In Kano they believe that Sarauniya (queen) is the wife of Malam Alhaji and the mother of Dan Galadima, Bagobiri being the slave of Dan Galadima, while Bagwariya is the concubine of Malam Alhaji.[159] In Gobir Malam Ali is alternative name for Malam Alhaji (the pilgrim).[160] It is obvious that Rakau, Kure, Galadima and Malam Alhaji (Malam Ali) are closely related, if not identical figures. On the basis of information collected among the Hausa of Tunis, it is possible to go one step further. Here the husband of Magajiya is called Malam Ali Geshe (from Hebrew *gešem* – rain?), Sarkin Fushi (king of wrath) and Sidi Ali, and in his praise-song he is specifically stated to be a „conqueror" and to be somebody who hurts the woman (*godiya* = Magajiya).[161] Besides the name Ali, there is his rage, his conquering ability, his power over rain *(gešem?)* and the violence used against Godiya/Magajiya which make the god look like a foreign Baal who conquered the land of Asherah.

In Kebbi the Bori adepts tell a story which could refer to a usurpation of power. It is the only story told with respect to the former gods. It deals with the two wives of Kure, Magajiya and Doguwa; the slave concubine of Kure, Bagulma; and his son Bawa, Daudu or Mohamman. Although the mother of this boy was Bagulma, Magajiya took the boy away from her and gave him to her elder sister Doguwa for breast-feeding. When Bagulma discovered that her boy had been stolen by Magajiya, she did not dare to claim him back because she was a slave. When Magajiya in turn asked her elder sister to return the boy to her, the latter refused.[162] This story should be compared to the tale of the Bori adepts of Sabon Birni (Gobir) referring to the quarrels between Rakau and his wife Magajiya about the ownership of their children.[163] In Gorin Dikko (central Kebbi) the Bori priestess sings a praise-song for Sarauniya-Anniya which mentions that Sarauniya (queen) killed the son of her co-wife, who is not mentioned by name (Magajiya?).[164] In view of the fact that the Bori adepts of Sabon Birni (Gobir) consider

156 With respect to the spirits this information was provided by A'i Kwotorkoshi and others, field notes: Sabon Birni, 31/8/95 (praise-song – *kasuwa*).
157 Eni, field notes: Argungu, 1/9/95.
158 Krieger: Notizen, 101, 107–109.
159 Greenberg: Influence, 37 f.
160 Nicolas: Dynamique, 514.
161 Tremearne: Ban, 306 f.
162 Eni, field notes: Argungu, 1/9/95; Hawa'u Dodo, field notes: Sauwa, 1/9/95.
163 A'i Kwotorkoshi, field notes: Sabon Birni, 31/8/95.
164 Kumba Natba, field notes: Gorin Dikko, 29/8/95.

Anniya-Zakuma to be the wife of Rakau and the co-wife of Magajiya, it is plausible to connect these elements. They may be interpreted as referring to historical upheavals involving the superior power of conquering goddesses: Magajiya/Asherah subdued Bagulma and Doguwa/Anniya/Inanna took the power from Magajiya. In these cases the divine husband, Baal or El, does not interfere in the struggle for political preeminence. But when he quarrels with his wife about the ownership of the child, he would appear – like Bayajidda – to be the god of the invaders.

c. Bawo – Baal

Finally we should turn our attention to Bawo who, according to the Hausa legend, was the father of six sons. These sons together with Biram, the first son of Bayajidda, make up the *Hausa bakwai*. Since Bayajidda also fathered a son with the foreign slave concubine – and thus gave rise to the *banza bakwai* – he is not the real ancestor of the Hausa. A more specific ancestor of the *Hausa bakwai* is Bawo, the son of Bayajidda with the queen of Daura, although Biram was not his son. In view of the proper name Hausa given to the descendants of Bawo (and Biram), and in modern times to the Hausa nation, we have to suspect an overlapping of two traditions, a formalized tradition centred on Bawo and an informal tradition centred on Hausa.

In order to clarify this confusing situation, we should first try to find out whether Bawo figures in the Bori pantheon, and if he does, which his particular features are. Indeed, the Bori adepts of Kebbi and Zamfara worship a spirit called Bawa, who is known to be a son of Magajiya and Kure, her husband.[165] This definition of Bawa as a son of Magajiya and a husband identical with Bayajidda shows that we are dealing with the same mythological pattern as in the legend of Daura. Further, we should note that in Kebbi and Zamfara Bawa is also known as Wanzami, and in Kebbi as Gazama.[166] The term *gàzamà* has no specific meaning in Hausa – although some think that it means „brave"[167] –, but it is recognized to be an epithet for men called Bawa.[168] As for *wànzaamì*, it is a word which in a number of Sudanic languages designates the „barber".[169] *Baawàa* itself means „slave" in Hausa, a definition acknowledged by the Bori liturgy, but rejected by the written and oral historical sources of Daura and Gobir. Although Bawa-Wanzami is clearly identifiable with Bawo of the Daura legend, is it conceivable that the ancestor of the great Hausa nation was either a slave or a barber?

[165] Fazi, field notes: Kamba, 27/8/95; Eni, field notes: Argungu, 1/9/95; in Zamfara he is considered to be the son of Galadima (Krieger: Notizen,109).
[166] Ibid.
[167] Eni, field notes: Argungu, 30/8/95.
[168] Bargery: Dictionary, 376; Abraham: Dictionary, 314.
[169] Hausa, Songhay, Kanuri.

It should be noted that elsewhere in Hausaland, and in particular in Gobir, Bawa is considered to be a synonym for Bagobiri.[170] This Bawa-Bagobiri should be distinguished from Bawa-Wanzami. Apparently the former, the *deos eponymos* of the Gobirawa, is identical to the *Bāwu na-turmi* (Bawo of the mortar) of the Gobir king list.[171] In another document from Gobir the name is rendered as *Bala na-turmi* (Baal of the mortar).[172] This form of the name Bawo reminds us of the Kebbi spirit Beela, thought to be a brother of Dango (Baal). It is tempting to relate Bala and Beela to Baal and more particularly to *ba'lā*, the Aramaic form of *b'l*.[173] On the other hand it should be noted that Bagobiri, the alternative name for Bawa, seems to echo the Biblical *haggeber* (the potentate).[174] On the basis of these elements it may be suggested that Bawo/Bawa once had, like Baal, who was the „lord" of the country and hence also the „king", a dominant position. Like Dango he would appear to have presided over the New Year's festival on a mortar. However, we also have to take into consideration the slave status of Bawa-Bagobiri, which is not only suggested by the Bori liturgy, but also by the linguistic transformation of the Semitic *b'l* or, more precisely, the Aramaic *ba'lā* (lord) to the Hausa *baawà* (slave).[175] Apparently the forebears of the Hausa experienced a dramatic loss of political independence by the subjugation of their king and their god to foreign conquerors.

As for the profession of barber which Bawa practised according to the Bori liturgy of western Hausaland – and to some extent also of Katsina and Kano – we find some support in the Hausa legends. The ancestor of the Baure of Arewa was a blacksmith, and the intermediate position of the Baure between the Sarauniya (Magajiya) and Ali (Bayajidda) suggests that his identity should be considered in connection with Bawo. Further, we note that according to the Hausa legend, Bayajidda had to contact the Abagayawa blacksmiths, so that they might forge for him the knife with which he would kill the dragon. It would appear that the „barber" of the Bori worshippers, the Abagayawa blacksmiths and the Baure of Arewa have something in common, insofar as all three practised a handicraft. Further, it should be noted that in two cases the evidence seems to reflect a situation in which craftsmanship stood in opposition to political power, an opposition which is strongly stressed by the name of Bawa (slave), the alternative name of Wanzami (barber) and of Bagobiri.

The information provided by Bori worshippers should be compared with the evidence derived from Songhay myths. Indeed, in the Songhay pantheon we find a craftsman deity called Hausakwai – „king of Hausa". According to Songhay mythology

[170] Nicolas: Dynamique, 312; King: Bbortì (1967) 105; Greenberg: Influence, 38; Reuke: Maguzawa, 129. In a legend recorded by Frobenius (Dämonen, 566–569) Bagobiri is the spirit of Bawa Jan Gwarzo.
[171] List of Dan Akali, see Hama: Histoire, 28.
[172] The name is given as Bala n'Tourmi in 1941 by Commandant Lemoine: Monographie, f. 4. (I owe extracts from this document to Mrs. Cornelia Nicodemus).
[173] Cohen: Dictionnaire, I, 74.
[174] Gesenius: Handwörterbuch, 128.
[175] Skinner (Lexicon, 16 f.) derives *baawà* from Semitic ba'l.

Anniya-Zakuma to be the wife of Rakau and the co-wife of Magajiya, it is plausible to connect these elements. They may be interpreted as referring to historical upheavals involving the superior power of conquering goddesses: Magajiya/Asherah subdued the divine husband, Baal or El, does not interfere in the struggle for political preeminence. But when he quarrels with his wife about the ownership of the child, he would appear – like Bayajidda – to be the god of the invaders.

c. Bawo – Baal

Finally we should turn our attention to Bawo who, according to the Hausa legend, was the father of six sons. These sons together with Biram, the first son of Bayajidda, make up the *Hausa bakwai*. Since Bayajidda also fathered a son with the foreign slave concubine – and thus gave rise to the *banza bakwai* – he is not the real ancestor of the Hausa. A more specific ancestor of the *Hausa bakwai* is Bawo, the son of Bayajidda with the queen of Daura, although Biram was not his son. In view of the proper name Hausa given to the descendants of Bawo (and Biram), and in modern times to the Hausa nation, we have to suspect an overlapping of two traditions, a formalized tradition centred on Bawo and an informal tradition centred on Hausa.

In order to clarify this confusing situation, we should first try to find out whether Bawo figures in the Bori pantheon, and if he does, which his particular features are. Indeed, the Bori adepts of Kebbi and Zamfara worship a spirit called Bawa, who is known to be a son of Magajiya and Kure, her husband.[165] This definition of Bawa as a son of Magajiya and a husband identical with Bayajidda shows that we are dealing with the same mythological pattern as in the legend of Daura. Further, we should note that in Kebbi and Zamfara Bawa is also known as Wanzami, and in Kebbi as Gazama.[166] The term *gàzamà* has no specific meaning in Hausa – although some think that it means „brave"[167] –, but it is recognized to be an epithet for men called Bawa.[168] As for *wànzaamì*, it is a word which in a number of Sudanic languages designates the „barber".[169] *Baawàa* itself means „slave" in Hausa, a definition acknowledged by the Bori liturgy, but rejected by the written and oral historical sources of Daura and Gobir. Although Bawa-Wanzami is clearly identifiable with Bawo of the Daura legend, is it conceivable that the ancestor of the great Hausa nation was either a slave or a barber?

165 Fazi, field notes: Kamba, 27/8/95; Eni, field notes: Argungu, 1/9/95; in Zamfara he is considered to be the son of Galadima (Krieger: Notizen,109).
166 Ibid.
167 Eni, field notes: Argungu, 30/8/95.
168 Bargery: Dictionary, 376; Abraham: Dictionary, 314.
169 Hausa, Songhay, Kanuri.

It should be noted that elsewhere in Hausaland, and in particular in Gobir, Bawa is considered to be a synonym for Bagobiri.[170] This Bawa-Bagobiri should be distinguished from Bawa-Wanzami. Apparently the former, the *deos eponymos* of the Gobirawa, is identical to the *Bāwu na-turmi* (Bawo of the mortar) of the Gobir king list.[171] In another document from Gobir the name is rendered as *Bala na-turmi* (Baal of the mortar).[172] This form of the name Bawo reminds us of the Kebbi spirit Beela, thought to be a brother of Dango (Baal). It is tempting to relate Bala and Beela to Baal and more particularly to *ba'lā*, the Aramaic form of *b'l*.[173] On the other hand it should be noted that Bagobiri, the alternative name for Bawa, seems to echo the Biblical *haggeber* (the potentate).[174] On the basis of these elements it may be suggested that Bawo/Bawa once had, like Baal, who was the „lord" of the country and hence also the „king", a dominant position. Like Dango he would appear to have presided over the New Year's festival on a mortar. However, we also have to take into consideration the slave status of Bawa-Bagobiri, which is not only suggested by the Bori liturgy, but also by the linguistic transformation of the Semitic *b'l* or, more precisely, the Aramaic *ba'lā* (lord) to the Hausa *baawà* (slave).[175] Apparently the forebears of the Hausa experienced a dramatic loss of political independence by the subjugation of their king and their god to foreign conquerors.

As for the profession of barber which Bawa practised according to the Bori liturgy of western Hausaland – and to some extent also of Katsina and Kano – we find some support in the Hausa legends. The ancestor of the Baure of Arewa was a blacksmith, and the intermediate position of the Baure between the Sarauniya (Magajiya) and Ali (Bayajidda) suggests that his identity should be considered in connection with Bawo. Further, we note that according to the Hausa legend, Bayajidda had to contact the Abagayawa blacksmiths, so that they might forge for him the knife with which he would kill the dragon. It would appear that the „barber" of the Bori worshippers, the Abagayawa blacksmiths and the Baure of Arewa have something in common, insofar as all three practised a handicraft. Further, it should be noted that in two cases the evidence seems to reflect a situation in which craftsmanship stood in opposition to political power, an opposition which is strongly stressed by the name of Bawa (slave), the alternative name of Wanzami (barber) and of Bagobiri.

The information provided by Bori worshippers should be compared with the evidence derived from Songhay myths. Indeed, in the Songhay pantheon we find a craftsman deity called Hausakwai – „king of Hausa". According to Songhay mythology

170 Nicolas: Dynamique, 312; King: Bòorfi (1967) 105; Greenberg: Influence, 38; Reuke: Maguzawa, 129. In a legend recorded by Frobenius (Dämonen, 366–369) Bagobiri is the spirit of Bawa Jan Gwarzo.
171 List of Dan Akali, see Hama: Histoire, 28.
172 The name is given as Bala n'Tourmi in 1941 by Commandant Lemoine: Monographie, f. 4. (I owe extracts from this document to Mrs. Cornelia Nicodemus).
173 Cohen: Dictionnaire, I, 74.
174 Gesenius: Handwörterbuch, 128.
175 Skinner (Lexicon, 16 f.) derives *baawà* from Semitic *ba'l*.

this deity forges for Dongo (Baal) the thunderbolts in the form of axes.[176] Hence it would appear that at a period when the main god of the Hausa was widely known to be a craftsman deity, Songhay mythologists substituted the name „king of the Hausa", recognized by everybody as applicable to the craftsman helper of Dongo (Baal), for their original proper name of this deity. Since *kwai/koi* is the Songhay term for „king", we are doubtlessly faced here with a West African development.

Going one step further, we note that the traits of Hausakwai are identical to the traits of the Ugaritic craftsman deity Kōshar-wa-Khasīs: Kōshar forged and blessed for Baal the two wonder weapons which enabled him to vanquish Yam;[177] he built the palace for Baal and thus helped him to establish his kingship in heaven.[178] Some authors suggest that the versatile Kōshar was also the initiator of magic and music.[179] To the Greeks the West Semitic craftsman deity was known as Hephaistos and, in legendary forms, as Kinyras, king of Cypros, and Kutar, king of Phoenicia.[180] He is mentioned in the Koran as Kawthar,[181] while in Borgu and in some neighbouring regions he is apparently remembered as Kisra or Kisira.[182] With respect to Hausakwai, we note that the craftsman deity is called by praise-names which are no longer understood: Kasar-Kasar (Songhay) and Gasaru (Kebbi).[183] It is difficult not to see in „Kasar" a derivation of Kōthar/Kōshar (in Hebrew: Košar; in Punic: Kyšar). Further, it is tempting to see in „Hausa" a derivation of Khasīs/Ḥasīs, but below we will consider a more appropriate etymology. Still, it would have been an extraordinary coincidence if the Songhay mythologists had accidentally given to their „king of Hausa" precisely the features of the Canaanite craftsman god, who in fact would seem to have been the main god of the early Hausa.

Among the Hausa themselves, the original name of Kōshar-wa-Khasīs is still recognizable in two instances. In Kano the supreme king of the spirits, Sarkin Aljan, is alternatively referred to as Sarkin Huši (= Khasīs).[184] Also we have Keetau (= Kōtar), a frequent epithet for Wanzami, employed in Bori liturgy and in daily parlance.[185] Sarkin Aljan is called Sarki and Sarkin Makada (king of the drummers) in Katsina and elsewhere.[186] An identification of Hausakwai, and hence Kōtar-wa-Khasīs, with Sarkin Aljan is supported by the magical and musical abilities of the West Semitic craftsman god. If it is correct ■ see in him the Hausakwai of the Songhay and the Bawa-Wanzami

176 Rouch: Religion, 62–69.
177 Gibson: Canaanite Myths, 43–44.
178 Ibid. 55–65.
179 M. H. Pope: Kōthar, in: WM, 296.
180 M. H. Pope and W. Röllig, in: WM, 234, 295.
181 Koran CVIII, 1.
182 Lange: Schango, 232 f.
183 Rouch: Religion, 84, 104.
184 Greenberg: Influence, 30 n. 3.
185 Erlmann and Magaji: Girkaa, 102; Abraham: Dictionary, 925.
186 King: Bòorii (1967) 61, 83, 101.

of the western Hausa, then we have to suppose that the forebears of the Hausa substituted at one point in their history Kōshar-wa-Khasīs for Baal. This substitution of a craftsman god for a state god would appear to have corresponded to a radical reorientation of the society itself due to the loss of national independence.

6. Further links between the Hausa and Canaan

Our exploration of the pre-Islamic dimension of Hausa history has led us to look for parallels in the Orient. A number of otherwise unexplained features of Hausa culture could thus be elucidated: the tale of the Hausa legend, the Gani festival of Daura, the Dango festival of Kebbi and the identity of several Bori spirits. Precise antecedents of these different phenomena are to be found in Canaan. Such a transfer of cultural traits coincides to some extent with the linguistic evidence. Linguists have recognized the existence of a Chadic subgroup within the Afroasiatic language family, composed of a variety of different languages spoken by Black Africans.[187] However, it is by no means clear at which period and under which circumstances the early speakers of these languages reached the Lake Chad region.[188] On the basis of the available cultural evidence for the Hausa, we may now suggest that strong religious influences reached Hausaland from Canaan and that these influences date from the formative period of the biblical creed.

The documentary evidence provided by the Kano Chronicle tends to support this contention. In fact, the earliest rulers mentioned in the chronicle do not belong properly to West Africa, but to the history of Israel. Bagauda, the great conqueror of Kano, who is specifically said to have been called Da'ūd (David), would appear to be identical to King David of Jerusalem (ca. 1010–970 BC). Possibly the name Bagauda, by which later generations in West Africa remembered the great king, is derived from Gath, the name of a kingdom in which David stayed under the protection of the Philistine ruler Achich.[189] According to the Kano Chronicle, David built in Barka (Philistia?) the „town of Goliath" (Ziklak?).[190] In fact, we know from the Bible that after the defeat of Saul, David moved from Gath to Hebron in Judah, where he was recognized as king. After some years in Israel, he became the successor of Saul's son. He then turned his forces against the Jebusite stronghold Jerusalem and conquered it.[191] Hence, the somewhat negative approach of the Kano Chronicle towards the „conqueror Bagauda" could either reflect the particularism of the northern tribes of Israel or the resentment of the Jebusite inhabitants of Jerusalem after the loss of their

187 Lukas: Gehalt, 286–299; Greenberg: Languages, 45–48; Jungraithmayr: Schichtstufen, 95–100.
188 Lukas: Verbreitung, 108–118.
189 1 Sam 27:1–7.
190 Reading Jilūtāwā instead of Tilūtāwā (Kano Chronicle, in: Palmer: Memoirs, III, 99).
191 2 Sam 5:6–9.

independence. Another possible derivation of Bagauda is from Hebrew *gĕbûd* (to attack).[192] A connection with Abraham could base itself on the epithet *Gaude* (prickly one?) given in Katsina to Sarkin Rafi.[193] Also Abraham was the first patriarch to come to Canaan and it would have made good sense, if he was the one who had built a city in Barka (the Holy Land). Yet, the mention of the name Goliath seems to refer to David. Further, to neglect the name David itself, given as an equivalent of Bagauda, would go directly against the evidence of the Kano Chronicle.

Next to Bagauda, the chronicle mentions Wārithī, a name which in Hebrew *(yôrēš)* and Arabic *(wārith)* means „heir", and which therefore could apply to Solomon. Wārithī is said to have been followed by Gijinmāsu, a ruler who had not yet established himself at Kano. Indeed, the chronicler prefers to follow those oral traditions which credit Yūsā (Yoshua) with the foundation of the city. In broad terms this fits the chronology of Israelite history from the exodus under Moses (Gijinmāsu?) to the conquest of Canaan under Joshua.[194] Yet, by attributing the „building of the city" to the foreigner Joshua, the Kano Chronicle once more adopts the perspective of the Canaanites. Quite out of context, the Chronicle situates between Gijinmāsu and Joshua the reign of the twins Nawata and Gāwata, in whom we can recognize the threatening Gog and Magog of the Bible.[195]

To these historical data derived from the only substantial written source available for the Hausa, we may add the following derivations for the geographical directions used in Hausa.

The term for north, *arèwa*, is derived from Ugaritic and Hebrew *ʿaliy* – „high, highest".[196] The expression parallels the term *ṣāfôn*, which designates in Hebrew Mount Casius/Jebel el-Aqraʿ – situated close to the town of Ugarit and hence north of Palestine – and by extension the „north".[197] Like *ṣāfôn*, *ʿaliy* was probably a term applied by the Hebrews to Mount Casius and to the corresponding direction. Hence we not only find in Hausa *arèwa*, but also in Yoruba *ariwá*, both having the same meaning.[198]

Next we should turn to the Hausa term for west, *yámma*. It is derived from *yām*, which in Hebrew designates the sea and the west; in Aramaic *yammā*. Since the Mediterranean sea lies to the west of Israel, the Hebrews understandably referred to the west as the seaside. A number of Chadic languages have preserved the West Semitic

192 Gesenius: Handwörterbuch, 133.
193 King: Bòorii (1967) 93.
194 Kano Chronicle, in: Palmer: Memoirs, III, 100. Last, who first suggested some of the above identifications, took it for granted that the Israelite names correspond to Islamic feedback into the local tradition (Historical metaphors, 166 f.).
195 Ezek 38:2–21; 39:1–16. The Koran mentions the threatening people Yāǰūǰ and Māǰūǰ (XVIII, 94–97) and the Babylonian angels Hārūt and Mārūt (II, 102).
196 Skinner derives *arèwa* generally from Afroasiatic *ʾal* (Lexicon, 6).
197 W. H. Schmidt: Ṣāfôn, in: THAT, II, 575–582.
198 Crowder: Dictionary, 41.

root *yām* and its prime meaning „sea, water", but not Hausa.[199] Again we find in Yoruba *yanma* for „west".[200]

Then we have *kudù*, the Hausa term for south, for which a derivation from *qōdeš* (holiness) seems to be likely. The Arabs call Jerusalem *al-quds*, the holy one, but already in the Old Testament the city is called *ʿir haqqōdeš* (holy city).[201] It would appear that parallel to the geographical expressions *ṣāfôn* and *yām* and also to the Hebrew term for south, *negeb* (desert), *kudul/qōdeš* was the specific Israelite term for the south, insofar as Jerusalem was the first great Judean city situated next to Israel. Another Hausa term for „south" is *gusùm*, corresponding to Yoruba *gusù*.[202] It may be derived from Hebrew *gešem* (rain), considering that in this case an African reality may have influenced the meaning given to the term, insofar as the south must have been perceived as the „land of the rain".

Finally we have *gabàs*, the Hausa term for „east", which in Yoruba corresponds to *gábasì*.[203] The term could be derived from Hebrew *gabîš* (ice) since the east of Israel, in contrast to the Mediterranean west, is known for its cold winter with snow and sometimes ice. Although the validity of individual derivations may be disputed, on the basis of the overall similarity of the Yoruba pantheon with the remaining Hausa deities, and the suggested derivation from Canaanite terms for the direction of the sky, it is hard to believe that we are faced here by isolated interregional loans. In fact, we know of no historical event which brought the Hausa massively into contact with the whole of Yorubaland, nor do we know of a major expansion of the Yoruba to the north.

Noteworthy are also the following ethnonyms given to the Hausa by some of their neighbours: Afuno by the Kanuri, Itefan by the Tuareg, Fufe by the Bachama and Wefofon by the Mumuye.[204] Perhaps these names, built on the root *fu*, are derived from Ephraim, the common designation of the northern kingdom of Israel.[205]

In the same line of thought, it may be suggested that the ethnonym Hausa is derived from Hoshea, the name of the last king of the northern kingdom of Israel. Hoshea was the leader of a pro-Assyrian party who came to power in this kingdom some time after the Assyrian king Tiglath-pileser III had conquered Syria and parts of Canaan (733 BC).[206] At the beginning of his reign he was an Assyrian vassal.[207] Later he rebelled, but he was defeated and imprisoned by the Assyrians. According to the Bible he ruled more in conformity with the religious law of Israel than his predecessors.[208]

199 Jungraithmayr and Ibriszimow: Chadic, II, 340 f.
200 Crowder: Dictionary, 212.
201 Isa 48:2; 52:1; Neh 11:1; Deut 9:24.
202 Crowder: Dictionary, 94.
203 Ibid. 92.
204 Wente-Lukas: Handbook, 150–1.
205 Donner: Geschichte, II, 303–316.
206 1 Kgs 29–30.
207 ANET, 284.
208 2 Kgs 17:1–2.

Conclusion: the Oriental dimension of Hausa history

In light of the preceding comparisons, we may finally venture the conclusion that the Hausa legend refers to the history of Israel and, more specifically, to the Assyrian conquest of the northern kingdom in 722 BC. We know from the Bible that, as a consequence of the defeat, the indigenous elite of Israel was deported to the east, where their traces are lost.[209] Some of the deported people must later have found their way to Africa, perhaps during the Persian period.[210] The legendary leader of the Hausa, Bayajidda, was apparently none other than the victorious god of the Assyrians seen through the eyes of the conquered people of Israel: for the Assyrians the god was Aššur, while for the Canaanites he was a powerful manifestation of Baal, „the Lord, Master of the earth" *(b'l zbl ars)*.

Confirmation for this shift of allegiance from the indigenous Baal-Yahweh to the foreign Baal comes from West Africa, where Baal-like deities are called *šangú*. Indeed, the Yoruba, the Songhay and the Achipawa worship a state god who has the same characteristics as the Canaanite storm and weather god Baal. Moreover, among the Oyo-Yoruba and the early Songhay of Kebbi, the king was considered to be the reincarnation of *šangú*.[211] Even the Hausa seem to have once cherished the name *šangú*, as we can judge from the designation Zaghāwa, applied to them by the Arabic geographers, and the ethnonyms Shonka and Sonka, by which they are still known to some people of the Benue.[212] Furthermore, we learn from the Kano Chronicle that in the seventeeth century the leader of the Maguzawa of the Kano city-state held the title Dhanku (= Shango).[213] The Gobirawa pride themselves still today to be „Shage, descendants of Shage, free Shage".[214] *Šangú* was in Mesopotamia the title of a high priest, but the neo-Assyrians frequently applied it to their king. Its application to the state god Baal would therefore seem to echo the same historical events as the transformation of Baal into Bayajidda.

In the Hausa legend all traces of Shango have been lost. Instead we find Bayajidda, the hero from the Orient who killed the dragon of Daura and married Magajiya (the priestess of Qadšu/Asherah). Bayajidda is identical to Ali, the ancestor of the westernmost Hausa, the Arewa, and he has the same characteristics as Mohamman-Mai-Gitti, the primordial leader of the Gobirawa. But is it possible to identify Mohamman-Mai-Gitti with the foreign Bayajidda, or does he correspond to the original Canaanite divinity Baal? In fact, as we have seen, the Bori adepts of Gobir consider Bagobiri, the presumed *deus eponymus* of the Gobirawa, to be a slave. If it is correct to see in this slave-deity, Bagobiri, the divine equivalent of the legendary Mohamman-Mai-Gitti,

209 1 Chr 5:26; 2 Kgs 17:3–6, 24; Neubauer: The ten tribes?, 14–18, 95–114.
210 Lange: Hausa-Traditionen, 71–2.
211 Lange: Schango, 227–235.
212 Wente-Lukas: Handbook, 150; Lange: Schango, 221.
213 Kano Chronicle, in: Palmer: Memoirs, III, 121.
214 Dan Akali, court historian of Gobir, Tsibiri, 3/1/95.

then we come to the conclusion that the early Gobirawa experienced the same disastrous foreign domination as the other forebears of the Hausa people.

On the other hand, we have the opponent of Bayajidda, the dragon of Daura. To be sure, he was not just a dreadful monster: the people venerated him as „the king of the well", and they still did so until recently; because he was the primordial king, he had to be vanquished before Bayajidda/Baal could establish his dominion on this earth. In fact, the legendary dragon of Daura has the same characteristics of the West Semitic sea god, Yam: he has power over the water, his kingship precedes the kingship of Baal, people conceive of him as a dragon, just like the monster Leviathan was one of the manifestations of the deity Yam.[215] Supplementary proof for the dragon's identity with Yam is provided by his specific name Ba-jimi.[216] In Canaan the victory of Baal over Yam was celebrated during the New Year's festival. In Daura this mythological event has in the context of Islam been historicized; it is still celebrated as the Gani today, even though very few persons know that the Gani festival corresponds to a reenactment of Bayajidda's victory over „the king of the well". Furthermore, the Gani of Daura is not an isolated festival in central West Africa. The Gani of Borgu, the Dango festival of Kebbi and the „New Yams festival" of the Yoruba are likewise survivals of the Canaanite celebration of Baal's resurrection or of his victory over Yam. In other words, we find important elements of Canaanite culture not only among the Hausa, but also among the *banza bakwai*.

However, certain Oriental survivals among the Hausa cannot be traced back to Canaan. Here we have to mention, above all, the notion of „seven Hausa states", which has its pendant in the „seven *banza* states". No doubt, there is a connection with the „twelve tribes of Israel", to which correspond the „twelve tribes of the Ishmaelites", later identified as the Arabs.[217] But if we consider the whole corpus of the Hausa legend we find that in some versions of the legend Bayajidda's victory over the dragon resulted in the splitting of the monster and in the formation of seven – or twelve – heaps near the well. This reminds us of the splitting of the Mesopotamian Tiāmat from whose dead body arose the subsequent generation of gods.[218] Since nothing similar is reported in the Canaanite sources about Yam, we have to suppose that the forebears of the Hausa had, like the Jews in their Babylonian exile, added to their Israelite and Canaanite heritage concepts derived from the Mesopotamian culture. Other examples of elements not traceable to the western Semites are the terms *šangú* and *pāšu* (axe). It would seem that only in the heartlands of Assyria the people from Canaan could have been exposed

215 Kaiser: Bedeutung des Meeres, 40–77; M. H. Pope: Jamm, in: WM, 289–291; F. Stolz: Sea, in: DDD, 1389–1402. Allusion's to Yahweh's victory over the sea are found in Isa 27:1; 51:9–10 and Ps 74:13–14.
216 Since Ba-jimi would seem to derive from Hebrew *hayyām* (the sea), Ba-Gulma from *haggūlmā* (the formless one) and Ba-Gobiri from *haggibbōr* (the strong one) the Hausa prefix *ba-* as such, which normally figures in nouns designating a person's ethnic affiliation, geographical origin, or professional or social position, may perhaps be understood as a residual article.
217 Gen 25:12–18; Koran XIV, 37.
218 Dalley: Myths, 254 f.

Conclusion: the Oriental dimension of Hausa history

In light of the preceding comparisons, we may finally venture the conclusion that the Hausa legend refers to the history of Israel and, more specifically, to the Assyrian conquest of the northern kingdom in 722 BC. We know from the Bible that, as a consequence of the defeat, the indigenous elite of Israel was deported to the east, where their traces are lost.[209] Some of the deported people must later have found their way to Africa, perhaps during the Persian period.[210] The legendary leader of the Hausa, Bayajidda, was apparently none other than the victorious god of the Assyrians seen through the eyes of the conquered people of Israel: for the Assyrians the god was Aššur, while for the Canaanites he was a powerful manifestation of Baal, „the Lord, Master of the earth" *(b'l zbl ars)*.

Confirmation for this shift of allegiance from the indigenous Baal-Yahweh to the foreign Baal comes from West Africa, where Baal-like deities are called *Šangá*. Indeed, the Yoruba, the Songhay and the Achipawa worship a state god who has the same characteristics as the Canaanite storm and weather god Baal. Moreover, among the Oyo-Yoruba and the early Songhay of Kebbi, the king was considered to be the reincarnation of *Šangá*.[211] Even the Hausa seem to have once cherished the name *Šangá*, as we can judge from the designation Zaghāwa, applied to them by the Arabic geographers, and the ethnonyms Shonka and Sonka, by which they are still known to some people of the Benue.[212] Furthermore, we learn from the Kano Chronicle that in the seventeeth century the leader of the Maguzawa of the Kano city-state held the title Dhanku (= Shango).[213] The Gobirawa pride themselves still today to be „Shage, descendants of Shage, free Shage".[214] *Šangú* was in Mesopotamia the title of a high priest, but the neo-Assyrians frequently applied it to their king. Its application to the state god Baal would therefore seem to echo the same historical events as the transformation of Baal into Bayajidda.

In the Hausa legend all traces of Shango have been lost. Instead we find Bayajidda, the hero from the Orient who killed the dragon of Daura and married Magajiya (the priestess of Qadšu/Asherah). Bayajidda is identical to Ali, the ancestor of the westernmost Hausa, the Arewa, and he has the same characteristics as Mohamman-Mai-Gitti, the primordial leader of the Gobirawa. But is it possible to identify Mohamman-Mai-Gitti with the foreign Bayajidda, or does he correspond to the original Canaanite divinity Baal? In fact, as we have seen, the Bori adepts of Gobir consider Bagobiri, the presumed *deos eponymos* of the Gobirawa, to be a slave. If it is correct to see in this slave-deity, Bagobiri, the divine equivalent of the legendary Mohamman-Mai-Gitti,

209 1 Chr 5:26; 2 Kgs 17:3–6, 24; Neubauer: The ten tribes?, 14–18, 95–114.
210 Lange: Hausa-Traditionen, 71–2.
211 Lange: Schango, 227–235.
212 Wente-Lukas: Handbook, 150; Lange: Schango, 221.
213 Kano Chronicle, in: Palmer: Memoirs, III, 121.
214 Dan Akali, court historian of Gobir, Tsibiri, 3/1/95.

then we come to the conclusion that the early Gobirawa experienced the same disastrous foreign domination as the other forebears of the Hausa people.

On the other hand, we have the opponent of Bayajidda, the dragon of Daura. To be sure, he was not just a dreadful monster: the people venerated him as „the king of the well", and they still did so until recently; because he was the primordial king, he had to be vanquished before Bayajidda/Baal could establish his dominion on this earth. In fact, the legendary dragon of Daura has the same characteristics of the West Semitic sea god, Yam: he has power over the water, his kingship precedes the kingship of Baal, people conceive of him as a dragon, just like the monster Leviathan was one of the manifestations of the deity Yam.[215] Supplementary proof for the dragon's identity with Yam is provided by his specific name Ba-jimi.[216] In Canaan the victory of Baal over Yam was celebrated during the New Year's festival. In Daura this mythological event has in the context of Islam been historicized; it is still celebrated as the Gani today, even though very few persons know that the Gani festival corresponds to a reenactment of Bayajidda's victory over „the king of the well". Furthermore, the Gani of Daura is not an isolated festival in central West Africa. The Gani of Borgu, the Dango festival of Kebbi and the „New Yams festival" of the Yoruba are likewise survivals of the Canaanite celebration of Baal's resurrection or of his victory over Yam. In other words, we find important elements of Canaanite culture not only among the Hausa, but also among the *banza bakwai*.

However, certain Oriental survivals among the Hausa cannot be traced back to Canaan. Here we have to mention, above all, the notion of „seven Hausa states", which has its pendant in the „seven *banza* states". No doubt, there is a connection with the „twelve tribes of Israel", to which correspond the „twelve tribes of the Ishmaelites", later identified as the Arabs.[217] But if we consider the whole corpus of the Hausa legend we find that in some versions of the legend Bayajidda's victory over the dragon resulted in the splitting of the monster and in the formation of seven – or twelve – heaps near the well. This reminds us of the splitting of the Mesopotamian Tiâmat from whose dead body arose the subsequent generation of gods.[218] Since nothing similar is reported in the Canaanite sources about Yam, we have to suppose that the forebears of the Hausa had, like the Jews in their Babylonian exile, added to their Israelite and Canaanite heritage concepts derived from the Mesopotamian culture. Other examples of elements not traceable to the western Semites are the terms *šangi* and *pāšu* (axe). It would seem that only in the heartlands of Assyria the people from Canaan could have been exposed

215 Kaiser: Bedeutung des Meeres, 40–77; M. H. Pope: Jamm, in: WM, 289–291; F. Stolz: Sea, in: DDD, 1389–1402. Allusion's to Yahweh's victory over the sea are found in Isa 27:1; 51:9–10 and Ps 74:13–14.
216 Since Ba-jimi would seem to derive from Hebrew *hayyām* (the sea), Ba-Gulma from *haggūlmā* (the formless one) and Ba-Gobiri from *haggibbōr* (the strong one) the Hausa prefix *ba-* as such, which normally figures in nouns designating a person's ethnic affiliation, geographical origin, or professional or social position, may perhaps be understood as a residual article.
217 Gen 25:12–18; Koran XIV, 37.
218 Dalley: Myths, 254 f.

so intensely to the royal Assyrian title, that finally they substituted it for their original theonym Baal. Likewise the term *pāʾlu*, not attested in West Semitic, supposes a heavy exposure to Akkadian linguistic influence, its Ugaritic equivalent *smd* (axe) even being mentioned in the Koran.[219]

Other Oriental survivals must have existed in Canaan, although they are not attested there. As an example we may mention the weapons of Bayajidda which figure prominently in Daura legend and custom. From the Baal myth of Ugarit we know that Kōshar-wa-Khasīs forged the two weapons which enabled Baal to vanquish Yam, but we do not know whether these weapons were thought to be passed down to the king. Although in general, there is only little evidence about the social and ritual background of the Canaanite myths, we may in this case supplement the dearth of the Canaanite sources by a second millenium letter from Mari on the Euphrates River which points out the divine origin of the king's weapons and thus confirms the legitimizing function of Baal's conflict with Yam. Quoting the storm god himself, the text states: „When you (the king) sat on the throne of your father, I gave you the weapons with which I fought against the Sea (*yam*)".[220] We have seen above that the regalia of the king of Daura consist mainly of the sword and the knife thought to have been used by Bayajidda to kill the dragon. During the ceremony of installation they are handed over to the new king.[221] The weapons are again exhibited each year during the Gani procession. Therefore we may conclude that, in spite of the silence of the Canaanite sources, the myth of Baal had important implications for the kingship ideology of the western Semites.

On the basis of these considerations we are now in the position to provide a new interpretation of the Hausa legend: Bayajidda, his three wives and his three sons all belong to the history and culture of Canaan. In order to get a clear picture of them, we have to distinguish between myth, historicized myth and history, three levels which are in the Hausa legend merged into one. Bayajidda himself, the dragon-killer and founder of the Hausa and *banza* states, corresponds to *bʾl zbl arṣ*, a powerful manifestation of Baal inspired by the Assyrian conquest of Israel. His union with Magajiya, the divine protectress of the local king, Baal-Yahweh, gives rise to the Hausa states. Biram, the first son of Bayajidda, who is surprisingly classified as Hausa, is identical to the patriarch Abraham. He stands for the period when Israel was governed by its own divine kings. Karbagari,[222] the second son, represents the Assyrian king who conquered Israel, eliminated the Israelite kingship and deported the henotheistic elite to Mesopotamia and thus exposed them to unadulterated polytheism. However, in spite of his military success and his great impact on the society, the Hausa legend does not present Karbagari as a legitimate ruler, since his mother was only a slave concubine. Finally we

219 Koran CXII, 2.
220 M. G. Smith: Early History, 56 f.
221 M. G. Smith: Daura, 99.
222 A derivation of the name from Hebrew *qbl* (receive) and *ʾIr* (town) may be worth considering.

have Bawo, the divine king of Israel and great loser of the Assyrian conquest; although he was eliminated along with the kingship of Israel, he survives in the form of a slave-patriarch *(baawàa)* as the main ancestor of the Hausa.

In fact, until today the prestige of Bawo has remained so great that the kingship is supposed to have passed directly from Magajiya to Bawo, without any major interference from Bayajidda. As for Karbagari, the town-seizer and great protagonist of Bawo, he is still supposed to control the court and, of course, he is the ancestor of the „real pagans", the Maguzawa and the Anna. Among the Hausa the kingship belongs to the sons of Bawo, while the *banza* are ruled by the sons of Karbagari. This leads us to the conclusion that the Hausa legend expresses basic dichotomies between Canaan and Mesopotamia, henotheism and polytheism, and national identity and universal syncretism. In some instances, like in the drumming for the king of Daura, this dichotomy becomes an opposition between Canaan and Lamurudu (Nimrod). The „seven Hausa" have remained faithful to their Canaanite henotheistic heritage, while the „seven *banza*", like the Maguzawa and the Anna, were deeply influenced by the Assyrian tradition. But often oral traditions confuse the two different legacies. A striking example is provided by a statement of the last titled *Sarkin Kano* (King of Kano) of Hausa origin, Attahiru. He declared that he was the greatest Jew of the country and the oldest descendent of Lamurudu (Nimrod).[223] Hereby he combined what the Hausa legend clearly separates, the tradition of Canaan, represented by Magajiya and Bawo, and the tradition of Mesopotamia and Nimrod, represented by Bayajidda and Karbagari.

The core element of the Hausa story is provided by the Israelite tradition of Canaan or, more precisely, by the biblical tale of Abraham, Sarah and Hagar. The all-powerful Bayajidda and his son, the conqueror Karbagari, have been woven into this tale without major disruption because Hagar was already the progenitress of the destructive desert nomads. However, there was no place in the tale for the craftsman god Kōshar-wa-Khasīs, the main deity of the early Hausa, nor could the defeated king of Israel, Hoshea, possibly be given the same status as Jacob, the grandson of Abraham and progenitor of the twelve tribes of Israel. Had the Assyrian conquest of Israel not shown that Baal-Yahweh had taken sides with the enemies of his own people? From now on the real, great storm- and weather god was Shango or *bʾl zbl arṣ* (Bayajidda), the supposed state god of Assyria. Baal-Yahweh only survived as a depotentiated ancestral figure, just as his last reincarnation,[224] Hoshea, is only remembered as the namesake of the „seven

223 Lemoine: Monographie, f. 3.
224 Generally the kings of Israel are not considered to reincarnate Yahweh, but see Ps 45:7, where the king is addressed as *elōhîm* (God), see also the references to Yahweh's combat with the sea (Ps 74:13–14; Ps 89:10) and notice the „brazen sea", a laver holding water (1 Kgs 7:23–26; 2 Chr 4:2–10), which might have been used by the king for the ritual reenactment of Yahweh's victory over Yam. In this connection attention should also be drawn to the two wells of Jerusalem, one of which was called „well of the dragon" (*ʿēn hattannîn*, Neh 2:13) and the other Gihon. Close to the „well of the dragon" was the stone Zōhēleth (snake?), where Adonijah made sacrifices in an attempt to usurp royal power (1 Kgs 1:9–25). King David reacted by ordering

Hausa", without being assigned a clear position within the Hausa legend. Still, after some time the exiled „people of Hoshea" must have felt that the loss of their own dynastic god had created a spiritual vacuum which threatened their national identity. Therefore they would seem to have substituted the craftsman god Kōshar-wa-Khasīs, the versatile helper of Baal, for their former dynastic god, lost to the Assyrians. This reorientation could explain why the once so powerful Baal has survived among the Bori worshippers only as a barber and a slave. It also allows us to understand why in Songhay mythology Kōshar-wa-Khasīs is called Hausakwai, „the king of the Hausa".

Later, when Islam had begun to marginalize the old gods, the craftsman deity began to lose his high status. From then on Muslims and traditionalists called him by the Hausa-Arabic name Sarkin Aljan – „King of the Spirits" (Aljan from Arabic *al-jinn* – the spirits). He was still the ruler of Jangare (Samaria?), the city of the spirits and the residence of their „King" and his court. But instead of ruling over gods, Sarkin Aljan ruled only over spirits. By that time the original religious foundation of Hausa society had already become the cultural background of Islam.

Abbreviations

ANET: Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament, ed. by J. B. Pritchard, 3rd. ed. (Princeton 1969).
BHH: Biblisch-Historisches Handwörterbuch, ed. by B. Reicke and L. Rost (Göttingen 1962–1979).
CAD: The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, ed. by I. J. Gelb et al. (Chicago 1964 ff.).
DDD: Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible, ed. by K. van der Toorn et al. (Leiden 1995).
KTU: The Cuneiform Alphabetic Texts from Ugarit, Ras Ibn Hani and Other Places, ed. by M. Dietrich et al. (Münster 1995).
NBD: New Bible Dictionary, ed. by J. D. Douglas, 2nd. ed. (Leicester 1982).
NBL: Neues Bibel-Lexikon, ed. by M. Görg and B. Lang (Zürich 1991 ff.).
RA: Reallexikon der Assyriologie (Berlin 1932 ff.).
THAT: Theologisches Handwörterbuch zum Alten Testament, ed. by E. Jenni and C. Westermann (Gütersloh 1971–1975).
WM: Wörterbuch der Mythologie, vol. I, ed. by H. W. Haussig (Stuttgart 1965).

that Solomon should in his stead be annointed as king at the well of Gihon (1 Kgs 1:28–40). Therefore it would appear that the Jerusalem „well of the dragon" had a similar function in the installation rituals practised by the kings of Israel as the Kusugu well where the kings of Daura performed important rituals in commemoration of Bayajidda's killing of the dragon.

Bibliography

Abraham, R. C.: Dictionary of the Hausa Language, 2nd. ed. (London 1962).
Ackerman, S.: The queen mother and the cult in Ancient Israel, in: Journal of Biblical Literature 112 (1993) 385–401.
Alkali, M. B.: Kebbi in the Nineteenth Century (M. A. Thesis, ABU Zaria 1969).
Arnett, E. J.: A Hausa chronicle, in: Journal of the African Society 9 (1909–10) 161–167.
Bargery, G. P.: A Hausa-English Dictionary (London 1934).
Barth, H.: Travels and Discoveries, 3 vols. (New York 1857).
–: Origin of the Hausa ‚bokkoi' in: P. A. Benton, The Languages and Peoples of Bornu, 2nd. ed., vol. I (London, 1968), 293–295.
Bello, Muḥammad: *Infāq al-maysūr*, ed. A. Gummi (Cairo 1964); transl. E. J. Arnett: The Rise of the Sokoto Fulani (Kano 1922).
Bordreuil, P.: Recherches ougaritiques, in: Semitica 40 (1991) 17–30.
Cohen, D.: Dictionnaire des racines sémitiques, fasc. II (Paris 1994).
Crowder, S.: A Dictionary of the Yoruba Language, 2nd. ed. (London 1937).
Dalley, S.: Myths from Mesopotamia: Creation, the Flood, Gilgamesh and Others (Oxford 1989).
Day, J.: God's Conflict with the Dragon and the Sea (Cambridge 1985).
Dietrich, M. and O. Loretz: „Jahwe und seine Aschera" (Münster 1992).
Donner, H.: Geschichte des Volkes Israel und seiner Nachbarn, 2 vols. (Göttingen 1984, 1986).
Driel, G. van: The Cult of Aššur (Assen 1969).
Engnell, I.: Studies in Divine Kingship in the Ancient Near East, 2nd. ed. (Oxford 1967).
Erlmann, V. and H. Magagi: Girkaa (Berlin 1989).
Fage, J. D.: A History of Africa (London 1978).
Falkenstein, A.: Akitu-Fest und Akiti-Festhaus, in: Festschrift Johannes Friedrich (Heidelberg 1959) 147–182.
Frobenius, L.: Und Afrika sprach, 3rd. vol. (Berlin 1912).
–: Dämonen des Sudan (Jena 1924).
Gese, H.: Die Religionen Altsyriens, in H. Gese et al.: Die Religionen Altsyriens, Altarabiens und der Mandäer (Stuttgart 1970) 1–232.
Gesenius, W.: Hebräisches und Aramäisches Handwörterbuch über das Alte Testament, 17th ed. (Berlin 1915).
Gibson, J. C. L.: Canaanite Myths and Legends, 2nd. ed. (Edinburgh 1978).
Gordon, C. H.: Ugaritic Textbook (Rome 1965).
Greenberg, J.: The Influence of Islam on a Sudanese Religion (Seattle 1946).
–: The Languages of Africa (Bloomingtom 1966).
Hallam, W. K. R.: The Bayajida legend in Hausa folklore, in: The Journal of African History 7 (1966) 47–60.
Hama, B.: Histoire du Gobir et de Sokoto (Paris 1967).
Harris, P. G.: Sokoto Provincial Gazetteer, mimeogr. (Sokoto 1938).
Hassan, M. and M. Shuaibu: Chronicle of Abuja (Ibadan 1952).
Helck, W.: Betrachtungen zur großen Göttin und der ihr verbundenen Gottheiten (München und Wien 1971).
Hogben, S. J. and A. H. M. Kirk-Greene: The Emirates of Northern Nigeria: A Preliminary Survey of their Historical Traditions (London 1966).

Hunwick, J. O.: The dynastic chronologies of the Central Sudan states in the sixteenth century: some reinterpretations, in: Kano Studies, NS 1 (1973) 35–55.
Jungraitmayr, H.: Sprachhistorische Schichtstufen in Tschadraum, in: Paideuma 23 (1977) 95–100.
Jungraithmayr, H. and D. Ibriszimow: Chadic Lexical Roots, 2 vols. (Berlin 1994).
Kaiser, O: Die mythische Bedeutung des Meeres in Ägypten, Ugarit und Israel, 2nd ed. (Berlin 1962).
Keel O.: Das Recht der Bilder gesehen zu werden (Freiburg 1992).
King, A. V.: A Bòorfi Liturgy from Katsina, in: Afr. Language Studies 7 (1966) 105–125.
–: A Bòorfi Liturgy from Katsina (London 1967).
Krieger, K.: Geschichte von Zamfara (Berlin 1959).
–: Notizen zur Religion der Hausa, in: Paideuma (1967) 96–120.
Labat, R.: Le caractère religieux de la royauté assyro-babylonienne (Paris 1939).
Landeroin, M. A.: Notice historique, in: J. Tilho: Documents scientifiques de la mission Tilho, 2nd. vol. (Paris 1911) 341–417.
Lange, D.: Le Dīwān des sultans du [Kanem-]Bornū: Chronologie et histoire d'un royaume africain (Wiesbaden 1977).
–: The evolution of the Hausa story: from Bawa to Bayajidda in: Afrika und Übersee 70 (1987) 195–209.
–: A Sudanic Chronicle: The Borno Expeditions of Idrīs Alauma (1564–1576) (Stuttgart 1987).
–: Das Amt der Königinmutter im Tschadseegebiet, in: Paideuma 36 (1990) 139–156.
–: Das frühe Kebbi und Mali: Versuch einer historischen Interpretation der Kanta-Traditionen, in: Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft 141 (1991) 139–166.
–: Die Hausa-Traditionen in ihrer Abhängigkeit von Kanem-Borno und Nubien, in: Anthropos 88 (1993) 47–76.
–: From Mande to Songhay: Towards a political and ethnic history of Medieval Gao, in: Journal of African History 35 (1994) 275–301.
–: Der Ursprung des westafrikanischen Wettergottes Schango, in: Saeculum 45 (1994) 213–238.
–: The Almoravid expansion and the downfall of Ghana, in: Der Islam (1996) (in press).
Last, M.: Historical metaphors in the Kano Chronicle, in: History in Africa 7 (1980) 161–178.
Lemoine, Cdt. in: Monographie du Cercle de Maradi en 1955: Arch. de Maradi, Doc. 14.1.9.
Lewis, B.: The Sargon Legend: A Study of the Akkadian Text and the Tale of the Hero who was Exposed at Birth (Cambridge, MA 1980).
Loretz, O.: Ugarit und die Bibel (Darmstadt 1990).
–: Ugarit-Texte und Thronbesteigungspsalmen (Münster 1988).
Lukas, J.: Der hamitische Gehalt der tschadohamitischen Sprachen, in: Zeitschrift für Eingeborenensprachen 28 (1937–8) 286–299.
–: Die Verbreitung der Hamiten in Afrika, in: Scientia 33 (1939) 108–118.
Meek, C. K.: The Northern Tribes of Nigeria, 2 vols. (Oxford and London, 1925).
Meissner, B.: Babylonien und Assyrien, 2 vols. (Heidelberg 1920, 1925).
Mischlich, A.: Beiträge zur Geschichte der Hausastaaten, in: Mitteilungen des Seminars für Orientalische Sprachen 6 (1903) 137–242.
Moor, J. C. de: An Anthology of Religious Texts from Ugarit (Leiden 1987).
Nadel, S.: Nupe Religion (London 1954).

Neubauer, A: Where are the ten tribes?, in: Jewish Quarterly Review 1 (1888–9) 14–18, 95–114, 185–201, 408–23.
Nicolas, G.: Dynamique sociale et appréhension du monde au sein d'une société hausa (Paris 1975).
–: La question du Gobir, Conf. paper: History of the Central Sudan before 1804 (Zaria 1979).
Olyan, S.: Asherah and the Cult of Yahweh in Israel (Atlanta 1988).
Orou Yorouba, R.: La Gani et ses implications socio-économiques (Maîtrise, Univ. du Benin, Cotonou 1982).
Pallis, S. A.: The Babylonian Akîtu Festival (Copenhagen 1926).
Palmer, H. R.: Western Sudan history: The rauthât ul afkâri, in: Journal of the African Society 15 (1915–6) 261–273; transl. of 'Abd al-Qādir b. al-Muṣṭafā: Rawḍāt al-afkār, ms. (Sokoto 1824).
–: Hausa legend and earth pyramids in the Western and Central Sudan, in: Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies 2 (1922) 225–233.
–: Sudanese Memoirs, 3 vols. (Lagos 1928).
–: The Bornu Sahara and Sudan (London 1936).
Piault, M.: Histoire mawri. Introduction à l'étude des processus constitutifs d'un État (Paris 1970).
Renger, J.: Untersuchungen zum Priestertum der altbabylonischen Zeit, Teil 1, in: Zeitschrift für Assyriologie 24 (1967) 110–188.
–: Heilige Hochzeit, in: RA IV 251–9.
Reuke, L.: Die Maguzawa in Nordnigeria (Bielefeld 1969).
Rouch, J.: Rites de pluie chez les Songhay, in: Bulletin de l'IFAN 15 (1953) 1655–1689.
–: La religion et la magie songhay (Paris 1960).
Salifou, A.: Le Damagaram ou sultanat de Zinder au XIX^{e} siècle (Niamey 1971).
Skinner, N.: Hausa Lexicon, Comp. Data, vol. I: A–K, preprint doc. (Wisconsin 1992).
Smith, A.: Some considerations relating to the formation of states in Hausaland, in: Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria 5 (1970) 329–346.
Smith, M.: The Early History of God (San Francisco 1990).
–: The Ugaritic Baal Cycle, vol. I: Introduction with Text, Translation and Commentary of KTU 1.1–1.2 (Leiden 1994).
Smith, M. G.: The Affairs of Daura: History and Change in a Hausa State, 1800–1958 (Berkeley and Los Angeles 1978).
Soden, W. von: Akkadisches Handwörterbuch, 3 vols., 2nd. ed. (Wiesbaden 1985).
–: Einführung in die Altorientalistik (Stuttgart 1985).
Sölken, H.: Die Geschichte von Kebbi nach Imam Umaru (I. Teil), in: Mitteilungen des Instituts für Orientforschung 7 (1959/60) 123–162.
Sutton, J. E. G.: Towards a less orthodox history of Hausaland, in: Journal of African History 20 (1979) 179–201.
Ta'rikh al-fattāsh, ed. and transl. by O. Houdas and M. Delafosse (Paris 1913).
Tremearne, A.: The Ban of Bori (London 1914).
Villomé, Lt.: Monographie du secteur de Maradi: Archives de Maradi, n° 4, 1913.
Virolleaud, Ch.: Nouveau chant du poème d'Alein-Baal, in: Syria 13 (1932) 113–163.
Walwyn, A.: History of Daura, in: Palmer, Sudanese Memoirs, III, 132–146.
Wente-Lukas, R.: Handbook of Ethnic Units in Nigeria (Stuttgart 1985).
Wolff, H. E.: Referenzgrammatik des Hausa (Münster 1993).

HAUSA HISTORY IN THE CONTEXT OF THE ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN WORLD

Although Hausaland lies in the Sudanic belt just south of the Sahara it is not blessed with many Arabic sources. Instead the historian has to rely on an oral tradition with important implications for pre-Islamic regional history and for the history of ancient contracts with the north. Indeed, the Bayajidda legend of the Hausa is one of the most comprehensive oral narratives of Africa and can be shown to be rooted in institutions of considerable age. Built on the ancient Near Eastern theme of the dragon-slayer and his marriage, it provides a clear statement of foreign antecedents and evidence of long-term Hausa dependency on Bornu, it explains the most important political institutions of Hausaland, and it situates the Hausa states among the societies of the Central Sudan. Although the historical implications of this oral data are not yet fully understood, it is has been suggested that the legend, by distinguishing between the seven Hausā and the seven Banzā states, represents a foundation charter of Hausa society. However, up to now it has been the narrative itself and the events it relates that have attracted most attention. Too little consideration has been given to the social implications of the story.[1] In fact, the legend's character as a foundation charter can only be fully appreciated once its far-reaching cult-dramatic and institutional connections as an earlier cult-myth are recognised. Being fully embedded in Hausa society, the story can neither have been invented for any short term political purpose, nor is it possible that wandering bards transmitted it independently from the festal ceremonies and state offices to which it is linked. Rather it would appear that the oral narrative and the basic institutions of the Hausa state are two faces of one and the same coin.

According to the Bayajidda legend, immigrants from Canaan founded Daura, the oldest town in Hausaland. The first rulers of Daura were successive queens belonging to this group of immigrants and bearing the title of Magajiya. However, with respect to the snake Dodo living in the well of the town, the Magajiya was only a priestess: she led the people in the appropriate worship of Dodo, the

[1] For earlier attempts to use the Bayajidda legend as an historical source see Hallam, "Bayajidda legend", 49-57; Smith, "Beginnings", 340-345; Smith, "Considerations", 335-337; Sutton, "Less orthodox history", 192-199; Smith, *Daura*, 55-59; Lange, "Hausa-Traditionen", 55-60.

real king (*sarkī*) of the town. Next the legend turns to the story of Bayajidda, the son of the king of Baghdad, who came to Bornu with a strong army. In Bornu he married the princess Magira, or rather the cult-mythological queen of the country, but having put his army under the authority of the king he became vulnerable and finally had to flee. On his way west he left his pregnant wife at the beginning of Hausaland where she gave birth to his first son Biram. Riding with his horse to the west he finally reached Daura at night and asked for water. An old woman told him that water was only available once a week since the snake Dodo did not allow the people to take more. Nevertheless he went to the well, lowered a bucket, pulled it up together with the snake and killed the monster with his sword. The next day people realized that Dodo, the unknown king, was dead. Magajiya promised that she would divide the kingdom between herself and the hero who had killed the snake. Bayajidda came to the palace and it was soon discovered that he was the one who had accomplished the heroic deed. But instead of accepting half the kingdom he wanted to marry Magajiya. The queen finally consented but since she had to remain a virgin she gave him her slave Bagwariya as concubine. After he fathered a boy called Karbagari ("take the town") with the slave, the queen became jealous and after some rituals she likewise became pregnant and gave birth to a boy called Bawo ("return the town to me"). Karbagari became the father of the founders of the seven Banzā states while Bawo had six sons who together with Biram became the founders of the seven Hausā states.[2]

Post-colonial historiography of Hausaland tends to highlight local factors of state development. However, in the light of the Canaanite and Baghdadian origins referred to in this story, local components alone do not explain the full meaning of the legend with respect to Hausa origins. Further, the casual dismissal of the ancient Near Eastern antecedents as boastful and artificial feedback is premature considering the weight of the legendary as well as cult-mythological and institutional parallels. Nevertheless, scholarly efforts aiming at African comparisons with non-African cultures should not restrict themselves to an analysis of similarities. They should also take into account differences. By doing so historians will gain precious insights into the particular conditions which brought about modifications of a common pattern.

1. Theories on the Origin of the Hausa States

Current scholarship dates the origins of the Hausa Kingdoms to the middle ages. Arguments for this late emergence of the Hausa polities are based on textual and circumstantial evidence. Arab geographers mention Kanem and Ghana as early

[2] See Palmer, *Memoirs*, III, 132-134, and pp. 289-296.

as the ninth century, but first refer to particular Hausa states in the fourteenth century.[3] The most relevant local Arabic source, the *Kano Chronicle*, seems to date the beginning of Kano (according to its unverifiable lengths of reign) to the end of the tenth century.[4] Considerations based on trans-Saharan trade tend to explain such an apparently late emergence of these states by the marginality of Hausaland with respect to major trade routes to the north. Kanem-Bornu and Ghana-Gao, lying close to the terminus of well-known caravan routes through the Sahara, appear to have had the benefit of direct communication to the north, while Hausaland seems to have been dependent on its neighbours for similar connections. Hence many historians assume that the Hausa states rose in consequence of an intensification of the medieval trade of the Central Sudan with North Africa.[5] However, if trade was the most important factor for the rise of the Hausa states, it would follow that these states fulfilled primarily bureaucratic and protective functions. The descriptions of various Hausa states by M. G. Smith and G. Nicolas emphasise the complexities and the composite nature of many political offices.[6] It is therefore difficult, if not impossible, to trace the political institutions of Hausaland back to precise political and economic functions.

Five theories try to explain the emergence of the Hausa states without taking into account the impact of medieval trans-Saharan trade. The oldest theory was put forward by anthropologists of the culture-historical school. On the basis of structural comparisons between a great number of African polities, it claims that the Hausa states are best described as divine kingships of the neo-Sudanic type. The many culture traits shared by these kingdoms suggest that they originated from a common source. The geographic point of diffusion of the neo-Sudanic state was variously supposed to have been the ancient Mediterranean world, Pharaonic Egypt or the Semitic cultures of the ancient Near East.[7] In spite of the fact that this idea has been brandmarked as diffusionist and Hamitic, it survives at present in the form of the Sudanic state theory. The proponents of the Sudanic state theory suppose that at some time during the first centuries AD, migrants from the Nile valley carried the idea of the Pharaonic state towards the

[3] Al Ya'qubi, al Bakri, Ibn Battuta in Levtzion/Hopkins, *Corpus*, 21, 42, 302; Hogben/Kirk-Greene, *Emirates*, 28-98.

[4] Palmer, *Memoirs*, III, 99; Smith, "Beginnings", 340.

[5] Smith, "Considerations", 332-333; Hiskett, *Development of Islam*, 70-71; Adamu, "Hausa", 269-271.

[6] Smith, *Daura*; id., *Kano*, 511-530; Nicolas, *Dynastique*, 203-205. See also Kühme, *Königtum*, 63-92.

[7] Frobenius, *Und Afrika*, 321-351; Baumann, *Völkerkunde*, 56-57, 61; Westermann, *Geschichte*, 34-46.

west.[8] However, five arguments must be raised against this idea. First, there is no evidence for the existence of continued relations between the Nile valley and West Africa. Second, the particular structures of West African kingdoms cannot be shown to be similar to those of ancient Egypt. Third, it is difficult to conceive that nomads, who themselves lived only at the margins of particular states, were the carriers of the idea of the state. Fourth, the spread of divine kingships is much more likely to have occurred during expansionist phases of the core state than during periods of decay. Fifth, the spread of Christianity in Egypt and North Africa must have contributed considerably to the weakening of divine kingship so that any further diffusion during that period appears very unlikely.

A second theory is of an etymological nature and builds solely on the similarity of names. Thus the legendary hero Bayajidda or Abuyazidu is supposed to have inherited his name from the Berber rebel Abuyazzidu who fell in 947 AD fighting against the Fatimids. Followers of the Berber and Khārijid leader are thought to have escaped to the Central Sudan where they conquered segmentary Hausa communities thus founding the Hausa states.[9] Three shortcomings of the Abū Yazīd theory are noteworthy. First, although the hero died in North Africa, the theory assumes that his name spread with some refugees to the Sudan. Second, it postulates that the followers of Abū Yazid were, in spite of their misfortune in the north, able to establish one or several conquest states in the south. Third, the theory very implausibly credits North African Muslims with the foundation of pre-Islamic divine kingships south of the Sahara.[10]

A third theory explains the origins of the Hausa states through the expansion of the Kanem-Bornu empire and the later breakaway of its western provinces. This argument also draws on the Bayajidda legend, as before arriving in Hausaland the founding hero stayed for a long time in Bornu and fathered his first descendant with a local wife there. Building further on evidence that prior to the nineteenth century the Hausa states paid annual tributes to Bornu, it suggests that the Bayajidda legend corresponded to a Bornu tax list.[11] Along the same line certain authors suppose that a number of royal symbols and institutions were borrowed by the Hausa states from the suzerain court of Bornu.[12] Although these

[8] Oliver/Fage, *Short History*, 31-37; Dittmer, "Afrika", 596-618.

[9] Palmer, *Bornu Sahara*, 273; Hallam, "Bayajidda legend", 49-51; Fage, *History*, 63; Hiskett, *Development of Islam*, 69-71.

[10] Hallam is aware of this contradiction when he writes that the Islamic faith of the immigrants lapsed or lay dormant until later ("Bayajidda legend", 59).

[11] Smith, "Beginnings", 347-352; Smith, "Considerations", 336; Sutton, "Less orthodox history", 196-197.

[12] Smith, "Beginnings", 351-352; Lange, "Amt der Königinmutter", 143-144; *id.*, "Hausa-Traditionen", 67-70.

ideas are widely shared by scholars, there is disagreement on chronology. While some historians link the Bornu factor to the state building process, others prefer to date the expansion of Bornu to the late medieval period when the states of Hausaland were already fully developed.[13] Nevertheless, most of them subscribe to the idea that the Bayajidda legend provides evidence of Bornoan suzerainty: if it can be shown that the legend is old, then Kanem-Bornu must have had considerable influence on the formation of states in Hausaland, but if the legend is a recent invention, then this would imply that the expansion of the Chadic state towards the west occurred too late to significantly influence the emergence of the Hausa states. Both hypotheses assume the validity of the medieval paradigm.

A fourth theory connects Hausa origins to the desertification of the Sahara and to corresponding or later shifts of populations from north to south. It is based on the Bayajidda story insofar as the legend traces the origin of Daura to the reign of primordial queens from North Africa, and on Gobir traditions which suggest a movement of immigration from Aïr.[14] The nomadic theory gave rise to the Hamitic hypothesis according to which Berber domination of the Hausa had a decisive influence on Hausa state building. The Berbers in question are often thought to have originated from North Africa where they had been acquainted with different types of states.[15] The major problem with this emphasis on long distance diffusion lies in the process of culture transfer. As with the theory of nomads from Egypt discussed above, it is difficult to imagine that camel herders, themselves living on the margins of the state and knowing little about royal urban life, could have transmitted detailed ideas about state structures. The theory is even more difficult to sustain if it supposes that local Berbers established conquest states without drawing on any model of a previously existing complex political organization.

The fifth theory is based on the notion of dual institutional structures traced back to the spread of Sudanic trade and Islam. Mainly based on the example of Katsina, the theory supposes that the establishment of a state-like institutional superstructure was the result of an ongoing process of social transformation due to the arrival of Wangara traders and clerics and the corresponding incorporation of Hausaland into the general West African network of long-distance trade

[13] For the first position see Sutton, "Less orthodox history", 195-199; Lange, "Hausa-Traditionen", 55-60, 67-70; and for the second Smith, "Beginnings", 345-349, and Smith, "Considerations", 335-342.

[14] Palmer, *Memoirs*, III, 95-96; Urvoy, *Histoire des populations*, 238-239, 243-245, 251-254, 259-267; Smith, "Considerations", 330-333; Hogben/Kirk-Greene, *Emirates*, 147, 368-369. Similarly but later Last, "Early kingdoms", 189-192.

[15] Palmer, *Bornu Sahara*, 1-3; Westermann, *Geschichte*, 30-32, 126-127; Johnston, *Fulani Empire*, 2-6; Nicolas, *Dynamique*, 25-26; Cuoq, *Histoire*, 275-277.

routes. The theory further stipulates that following the conquest of the chieftaincy by members of the Muslim community of traders, the priest-chief was superseded – without being eclipsed – by a king. In the new system of contrapuntal paramountcy established at the end of the fifteenth century, the Muslim conqueror of Wangara origin is not only supposed to have confirmed the power of the earlier pagan priest-chief, but also to have raised him to the second highest position in the realm and to have entrusted him with the privilege of electing the king.[16]

In spite of the cogent connection between the expansion of trade and the rise of states, the dual institutional theory has a number of weaknesses. According to the Katsina king lists, the usurper Korau was a wrestler from Yandoto who killed his predecessor Sanau.[17] Nothing suggests that Korau was a Wangara trader or a Muslim.[18] In fact, the king lists explicitly state that Islam was introduced by Muhammad Korau, the third successor of Korau. Also, it is unlikely that Muslim traders seized power in Katsina by force of arms and it is even more suspicious that they should have bestowed considerable powers on the existing pagan chief. Therefore it is quite unwarranted to connect the elimination of Sanau with the expansion of Wangara trade and the spread of Islam.

Still, the dual institutional theory rightly considers the transition from Sanau to Korau as a pivotal event in Katsina history corresponding as such to more than just a dynastic change. As chief of the Durbawa, Sanau was the leader of the Aznā clan-family, while Korau, the head of the 'Yan Korau, the "people of Korau", was the leader of the Hausā clan-family, the two sections of Katsina society found all over Hausaland. As we shall see, the political prevalence of either the Hausā or the Aznā clan-family provides the decisive criterion for the distinction between the seven Hausā and the seven Banzā states. The Bayajidda legend itself has the character of a foundation charter of Hausa society insofar as it not only explains the difference between the Hausā and the Banzā states but also the distinction between the Hausā and the Aznā clan-families within the two categories of Central Sudanic states.[19] Since the coexistence of the two clan-families is constitutive for the Hausa societies and states, it cannot possibly have been introduced by foreign intruders in the late medieval period.

[16] Fuglestad, "Reconsideration", 326-328; Palmer, "Katsina Emirate", *in:* Tempel/Temple, *Notes*, 472.

[17] Palmer, "History of Katsina", 221-222; Nicolas, *Dynamique*, 65.

[18] The supposition that Korau was a Wangara trader rests mainly on Korau's assumed Yandoto origin which itself is disputed by Usman (*Transformation*, 16).

[19] This is only the case for the oral version of the legend (see below sec. 11), the validity of which is confirmed by independent traditions for Katsina and Gobir (Nicolas, *Dynamique*, 65, 161).

The rise of African history as an academic discipline is charaterized by an emphasis on local developments. From the example of Hausa historiography it can be seen that the dismissal of any important influence from the outside world, disregarding earlier proposals to this effect[20], has led research into a *cul-de-sac*. For more than two decades no significant attempts have been made to overcome these obvious chronological and conceptual shortcomings of the available reconstructions of Hausa history. At present we are therefore reduced to a number of confusing and mutually exclusive theories. The evidence of the following pages will show that placing Hausa society and history in the context of ancient Near Eastern history and culture opens up new perspectives for research.

2. Cult-Dramatic Re-Enactments of the Bayajidda Legend During the New Year Festivals of Hausaland

The most obvious link relating the Bayajidda narrative to Hausa tradition as a whole consists of its annual re-enactments during the festal ceremonies in the royal towns in Hausaland. However, as a result of the Fulani *jihād* at the beginning of the nineteenth century many institutions and other survivals from the pre-Islamic period were abolished. Only in the kingdoms which remained under Hausa domination have these traditions survived almost unchanged. This is particularly true for Daura, where the British colonial administration reinstated the original Hausa dynasty in 1906. It is also the case in Gobir, where the Hausa rulers were able to resist the Fulani *jihād*. In Zaria the Hausa ruling class was expelled but they founded the refugee kingdom of Abuja, the present Sulleja further south. After their conquest of the Hausa kingdoms, the Fulani specifically abolished the royal offices given to women. Apparently they recognised that these offices were of decisive significance for the pre-Islamic heritage of the Hausa states.[21]

The Gani festival of Daura as a whole consists of the systematic re-enactment of the Bayajidda legend. Today most of the participants of the festival content themselves with the idea that they are celebrating the fully Islamic *mawlūd* or birthday of the Prophet Muhammad. Only a few insiders with historical interests are aware that the legend and the corresponding festival belong to an ancient Hausa tradition rooted in the pre-Islamic past. Superficial observers may think that the Gani festival takes place in the same way as the two other great Islamic festivals celebrated by processions on horseback, the *bàbbar sallà* (*'id al-kabir*) and the *kàramar sallà* (*'id al-saghir* or *'id al-fitr*). In fact, the more complex and

[20] Frobenius, *Und Afrika*, 488, 561-563; Tremearne, *Ban of Bori*, 392-426; Hallam, "Bayajidda legend", 57-58.

[21] Smith, *Zazzau*, 131; id., *Daura*, 276; id., *Kano*, 206, 231.

routes. The theory further stipulates that following the conquest of the chieftaincy by members of the Muslim community of traders, the priest-chief was superseded – without being eclipsed – by a king. In the new system of contrapuntal paramountcy established at the end of the fifteenth century, the Muslim conqueror of Wangara origin is not only supposed to have confirmed the power of the earlier pagan priest-chief, but also to have raised him to the second highest position in the realm and to have entrusted him with the privilege of electing the king.[16]

In spite of the cogent connection between the expansion of trade and the rise of states, the dual institutional theory has a number of weaknesses. According to the Katsina king lists, the usurper Korau was a wrestler from Yandoto who killed his predecessor Sanau.[17] Nothing suggests that Korau was a Wangara trader or a Muslim.[18] In fact, the king lists explicitly state that Islam was introduced by Muhammad Korau, the third successor of Korau. Also, it is unlikely that Muslim traders seized power in Katsina by force of arms and it is even more suspicious that they should have bestowed considerable powers on the existing pagan chief. Therefore it is quite unwarranted to connect the elimination of Sanau with the expansion of Wangara trade and the spread of Islam.

Still, the dual institutional theory rightly considers the transition from Sanau to Korau as a pivotal event in Katsina history corresponding as such to more than just a dynastic change. As chief of the Durbawa, Sanau was the leader of the Aznā clan-family, while Korau, the head of the 'Yan Korau, the "people of Korau", was the leader of the Hausā clan-family, the two sections of Katsina society found all over Hausaland. As we shall see, the political prevalence of either the Hausā or the Aznā clan-family provides the decisive criterion for the distinction between the seven Hausā and the seven Banzā states. The Bayajidda legend itself has the character of a foundation charter of Hausa society insofar as it not only explains the difference between the Hausā and the Banzā states but also the distinction between the Hausā and the Aznā clan-families within the two categories of Central Sudanic states.[19] Since the coexistence of the two clan-families is constitutive for the Hausa societies and states, it cannot possibly have been introduced by foreign intruders in the late medieval period.

[16] Fuglestad, "Reconsideration", 326-328; Palmer, "Katsina Emirate", *in:* Tempel/Temple, *Notes*, 472.

[17] Palmer, "History of Katsina", 221-222; Nicolas, *Dynamique*, 65.

[18] The supposition that Korau was a Wangara trader rests mainly on Korau's assumed Yandoto origin which itself is disputed by Usman (*Transformation*, 16).

[19] This is only the case for the oral version of the legend (see below sec. 11), the validity of which is confirmed by independent traditions for Katsina and Gobir (Nicolas, *Dynamique*, 65, 161).

The rise of African history as an academic discipline is charaterized by an emphasis on local developments. From the example of Hausa historiography it can be seen that the dismissal of any important influence from the outside world, disregarding earlier proposals to this effect[20], has led research into a *cul-de-sac*. For more than two decades no significant attempts have been made to overcome these obvious chronological and conceptual shortcomings of the available reconstructions of Hausa history. At present we are therefore reduced to a number of confusing and mutually exclusive theories. The evidence of the following pages will show that placing Hausa society and history in the context of ancient Near Eastern history and culture opens up new perspectives for research.

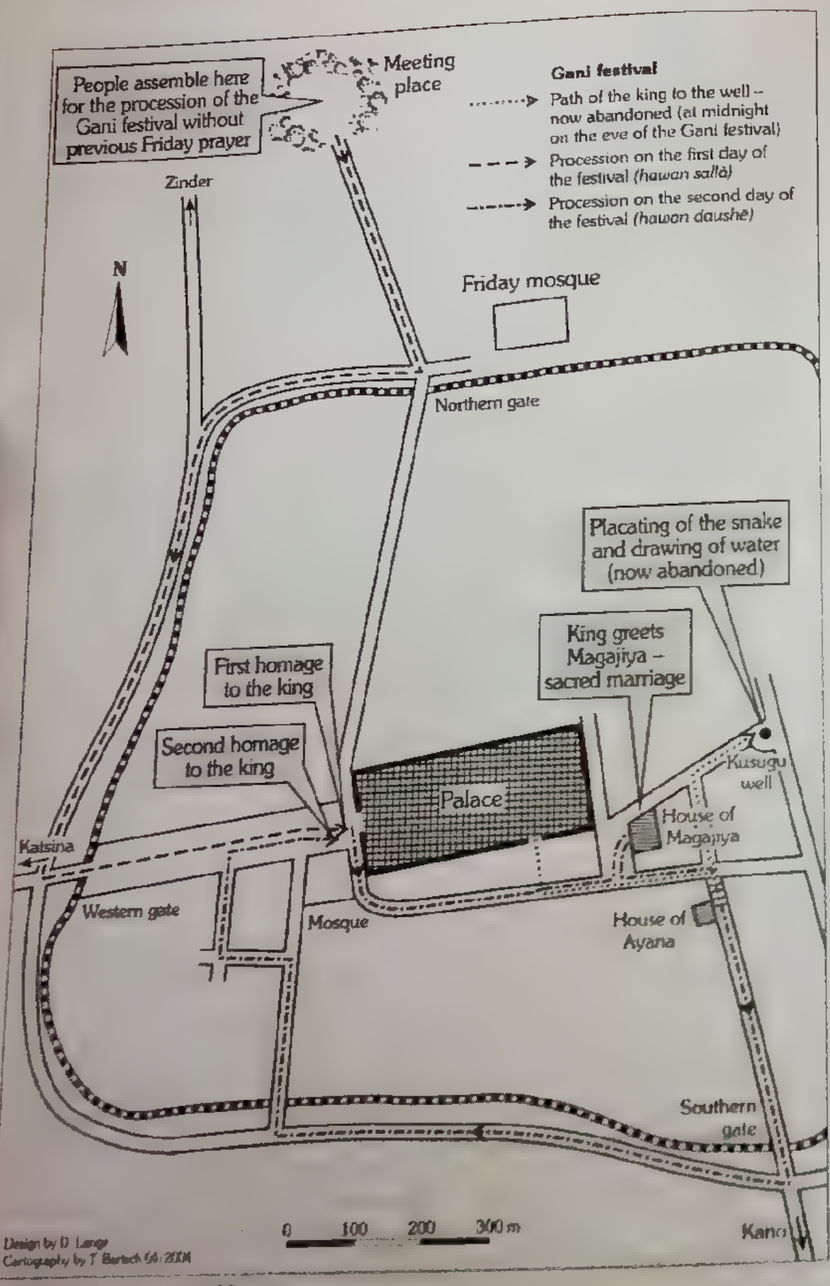
2. Cult-Dramatic Re-Enactments of the Bayajidda Legend During the New Year Festivals of Hausaland

The most obvious link relating the Bayajidda narrative to Hausa tradition as a whole consists of its annual re-enactments during the festal ceremonies in the royal towns in Hausaland. However, as a result of the Fulani *jihād* at the beginning of the nineteenth century many institutions and other survivals from the pre-Islamic period were abolished. Only in the kingdoms which remained under Hausa domination have these traditions survived almost unchanged. This is particularly true for Daura, where the British colonial administration reinstated the original Hausa dynasty in 1906. It is also the case in Gobir, where the Hausa rulers were able to resist the Fulani *jihād*. In Zaria the Hausa ruling class was expelled but they founded the refugee kingdom of Abuja, the present Sulleja further south. After their conquest of the Hausa kingdoms, the Fulani specifically abolished the royal offices given to women. Apparently they recognised that these offices were of decisive significance for the pre-Islamic heritage of the Hausa states.[21]

The Gani festival of Daura as a whole consists of the systematic re-enactment of the Bayajidda legend. Today most of the participants of the festival content themselves with the idea that they are celebrating the fully Islamic *mawlid* or birthday of the Prophet Muhammad. Only a few insiders with historical interests are aware that the legend and the corresponding festival belong to an ancient Hausa tradition rooted in the pre-Islamic past. Superficial observers may think that the Gani festival takes place in the same way as the two other great Islamic festivals celebrated by processions on horseback, the *bikkar sallà* (*'id al-kabir*) and the *karàmar sallà* (*'id al-saghir* or *'id al-fitr*). In fact, the more complex and

[20] Frobenius, *Und Afrika*, 488, 561-563; Tremearne, *Ban of Bori*, 392-426; Hallam, "Bayajidda legend", 57-58.

[21] Smith, *Zazzau*, 131; id., *Daura*, 276; id., *Kano*, 206, 231.



Map 2: The Gani festival of Daura

Photo 1: The king of Daura during the great procession of the Gani festival. Daura 1995

more original *sallàr Gàni* provided the original model for the other two more islamized festivals.

What then are the most important features of the Gani festival? Above all it has to be noted that the king acts on the three outstanding days of the festival as an incarnation of Bayajidda, his legendary ancestor. The first performance, which is now obsolete, was very secret. It was enacted on the eve of the festival at midnight by four persons: the king himself, his close advisor Shamaki and two Dakama singers.[22] The king then went to the well of Kusugu, listened to the song, placating the snake and drew holy water from the well.

The second performance is staged in the form of a great procession (*hawan sallà*) in the afternoon of the first day of the festival, leading from a place north of the town to the western gate and then to the palace. At the centre of the parade we find the king sitting on horseback holding in his hands the sword and the knife used by his ancestor to kill the snake and to cut off its head. Close to the king are, as the night before, Shamaki and the Dakama singers. All participants

[22] On the functions and social background of these officials see Smith, *Daura*, 42, 137, 315.

in the festivities rejoice on this day; but only the insiders realize that they are celebrating the killing of the snake.

The third performance takes place on the second day and consists again of a great parade (*hawan daushē*). But this time the cortège of horse riders and men on foot starts from the palace and leads to the house of the Magajiya. In commemoration of the preliminary rule of the Queen Magajiya Daurama and her subsequent marriage to the dragon-killer, the king stops at the house of the present Magajiya, enters and greets her. Next, the cavalcade moves on, passes by the house of Ayana – the old woman who once received the hero during the night and advised him on how to approach the well – crosses the former southern gate of the town and turns back by the next gate to the palace.

Both processions are patterned on the legend of Daura, the first representing the triumphal entry of the hero into Magajiya's palace and the second his subsequent marriage to the queen. In spite of the Islamic overlay of the celebrations, it is not difficult to recognise that the main ceremonies correspond to an ancient cult-drama constituting a New Year festival.[23]

A major question with respect to the Gani festival of Daura concerns the incarnation of Bagwariya. There are a number of arguments in favour of the Iya. She is officially regarded as the king's sister and she presides over the ritual washings, seclusion and instruction of every prince on his first marriage. She is further in charge of selecting the three major non-Islamic – probably Aznā – titles: Magajin Bayamadi, Sarkin Masu and Dan Baroka. Particularly significant is her connection with Magajin Bayamadi since he is considered the descendant and the incarnation of Karbagari.[24] During the major festivals the king visited the Iya on his way to the prayer ground outside the town for a "private audience".[25] According to another author, during this visit the Iya produced two strips of woven white cloth and presented it with the words "here is the milk".[26] Earlier this "private audience" was probably seen as a re-enactment of Bayajidda's relationship with Bagwariya. In Gobir the Iya or Inna is likewise considered to be the "sister" of the king and, as we shall see, the festal cult-drama insinuates that the two have intimate relations.[27] In Bornu the Magira performed similar functions as the Magajiya of Daura, while another female offical corresponded to the Bagwariya.[28] The second female official held in the Kanuri kingdom of Musune the title of Luwa. During the rituals of coronation the king chose a mate from among the girls of the Ngalaga (Duguwa?) clan with whom he spent his seven days of seclusion. By this choice and the subsequent concubinage during the period of seclusion, the girl received the title and position of Luwa.[29] Recent attempts to reach greater conformity to Islam have most likely contributed to obscuring the role of the Luwa of Musune in the installation ceremonies and of the Iya of Daura in the Gani festival.

Similar processions based on a common cult-mythological pattern take place in the other royal towns of Hausaland during the great Islamic festivals. In Zaria the procession of the first day (*hawan sallā*) starts likewise from the prayer ground north of the town, then it moves outside the town to the northwest and enters from the west heading east to the palace. On the third day (*hawan daushē*) the people start from the palace and turn south – in pre-Fulani times probably to the southeast to the house of Magajiya – and cross the southern gate. After a short while they return by the same gate but they then join the main road to the palace.[30] On both occasions the cavalcade passes by the square called *Bābban Dōdo* "the great Dodo" at a distance of one kilometer from the palace. Here the king and the warrior groups from the head of the cortege stop for a few minutes. When a distant drum is sounded they continue. Hidden under the hood of his burnous the king is supposed to be invisible until he reaches the palace.[31] Most likely his warriors used to perform mock fights at this spot thus re-enacting the killing of Dodo by the mythical hero.

Certain pre-Islamic practices are better preserved in Abuja/Sulleja than in Zaria. With respect to the royal festivals some details supplement the information available for Zaria: the existence of a Gani festival corresponding to the Islamic *mauliud*, the visits of the king to a male and two female officials, the Turaki, the Sarauniya and the Iya (who each have their own royal household with titleholders corresponding to those of the king), a special song making it clear that Gani

[23] Frankfort, *Kingship*, 313-333; de Moor, *New Year*, I, 4-29.

[24] Smith, *Daura*, 133; FN 97, 16-22.

[25] Smith, *Daura*, 35, 39, 93, 123-124. This information places the meeting between the king and the Iya on the first day of the Gani festival before the great procession (*hawan sallā*). It supports the validity of those versions of the Bayajidda legend which claim that Bagwariya came with the hero from Bornu and that she was pregnant before she arrived in Daura (Palmer, *Memoirs*, III, 133). Alhasan mentions that Bayajidda came with a slave (FN 95, 81).

[26] Palmer, *Memoirs*, III, 145. Because of its pre-Islamic implications, the Iya office is now purely honorific.

[27] Kühme, *Konigtum*, 82-88; 123-124; Nicolas, *Dimensions*, 340-342; 389.

[28] By indicating that the hero married Magira in Bornu, most versions of the Bayajidda legend suggest the parallel position of Magira and Magajiya (cf. Arnett, "Hausa chronicle", 162; Palmer, *Memoirs*, III, 133; Salifou, *Damagaram*, 233; Smith, *Daura*, 54). For the female offices in Bornu see Platte, *Frauen*, 163-242.

[29] In Dikwa, this corresponds to the title of Tauda and in Ndufu to that of Zamzam (Platte, *Frauen*, 183, 186-192).

[30] Both processions follow a similar route as those of Daura (see above map 2 p. 222).

[31] Garba, Abu Bakr Shantali, Saddiq FN 00, 1, 28-32.

is a New Year festival, and the custom of finishing the festival after twenty days by dancing to the end of the town with two branches of a certain tree and then throwing the branches over the town wall. Further, it is noteworthy that the king on the eve of the Gani festival goes by foot to the house of the Turaki where he sits down with his host between two lampstands each holding twelve receptacles for oil.[32] The next day he greets, one after the other, the two women officials by the respectful address "*mā*" signifying "mama, mother" before entering with his officials into their house and dancing with them.[33] All these elements point to the now largely forgotten former cultic significance of the Gani festival of Abuja/Zaria. The night vigil can be associated with the killing of the dragon, the honorific "mother" with a title given to a priestess, and the dancing with a sacred marriage. Therefore these features appear to belong to the cult-dramatic underpinning of the myth lying behind the Bayajidda legend.

In Gobir the Canaanite cult-mythological pattern of the New Year festival is re-enacted quite differently. On one of the days preceding the festival, the *Sarkin Annā*, the "king of the Annā people", goes to see the king in his palace. He brings with him a golden and a silver bangle and also a ram. The meeting between him and the king consists of a ritual combat: he puts the golden bangle on the right arm of the king and keeps the silver one for himself, then both pretend to engage in a short fight; finally Sarkin Annā removes the silver bangle and places it on the left arm of the king. After that both protagonists caress the ram from its tail to its head.[34] The ram, handed over by the first official to the second, symbolically represents the primordial being of which Sarkin Annā is the descendant and living representative. The ritual combat fight in turn can be interpreted as a symbolic confrontation between the forces of the moon and those of the sun. Indeed, since Sarkin Annā represents Karbagari/Ishmael and the king Bawo/Isaac-Jacob, the antagonism refers not only back to the distinction between the Aznā/Annā and the Hausā clans but also to the ancestral division between the Hausā and Banzā states and thus to the difference between the Israelites and the Arabs.[35] Beyond the legendary level, the ritual combat between incarnations of the sun and the moon also has vast mythological implications: apparently the forces behind Bawo/Isaac-Jacob were the deities of the upperworld and those behind Karbagari/Ishmael were the deities of the netherworld. Hence, it may be supposed that the

[32] In Feske/Kebbi, Turaka is the name of the hut of Dango used at the festival of *watan bakwai* (Sheku, Mai Bori FN 95 130).

[33] Tanko Turaki, Bisalla Sata FN 97, 78-82. See also Hassan/Shuaibu, *Chronicle*, 65-66, 68.

[34] Nicolas, "Fondements", 223; id., *Dynamique*, 362 ; id., *Question*, 13; Kühme, *Königtum*, 79, 93.

[35] Lange, "Ursprung des Bösen", 6-26.

biblical dichotomy between the sons of Jacob/Israel and those of Ishmael is based on the astral dualism of the Semitic pantheon distinguishing between societies with prevalent upperworld and netherworld deities. Descent from Jacob is therefore the legendary aspect of the prevalence of the sun, i.e. the upperworld deities, in Israel and descent from Ishmael the legendary aspect of the prominent position of the moon, i. e. the netherworld deities, among the pre-Islamic Arabs.[36]

On the eve of the festival, the king of Gobir walks to the house of *Sarkin Makēra* "king of the blacksmiths" and strikes twelve times upon one of the twelve drums of the kingdom.[37] As a descendant of Bayajidda he apparently begins a cycle of cult-dramatic performances commemorating the killing of the primordial snake and its splitting up into twelve parts.[38] On the cult-mythological level he incarnates – as in Daura – the god of creation, while the chief of the blacksmiths stands apparently for an allied god of handicraft. According to the Baal Cycle of Ugarit, the god of handicraft Kothar wa-Khasis forged for the god of creation Baal the powerful weapons used by the latter to kill the primordial deity Yamm, which in Babylon was called Tiamat.[39] The comparison suggests that, acting out the cult drama of the New Year festival, the Baal-like king meets the chief blacksmith in Gobir in order to prepare himself for his subsequent fight with primeval chaos.

On the following day, the people of Gobir celebrate the sacrifice of the ram in such an original way that only minor elements of the cult-dramatic performance can possibly have been borrowed from Islam. The main ceremony takes place on the communal prayer ground at the southeast of the town. During the prayers the king stays in the middle of the congregation in an enclosed temporary shelter built for the occasion. After the prayers the donated ram is slaughtered in front of the assembly. Then the king himself changes his ordinary dress for those of his crowning ceremony. When he comes out of his shelter the sober mood of the congregation turns to joyfulness and jubilation.[40] For the interpretation of this scene

[36] For the importance of the moon deity among the pre-Islamic Arabs see Fahd, *Panthéon*, 18-24; Höfner, "Stammesgruppen", 467, 492-494, 549. Day distinguishes between astral deities – thus bringing the sun and the moon together – and underworld deities (*Yahweh*, 151-225).

[37] Nicolas, *Dynamique*, 363; Boyd, "Sallah in Gobir", 593-594; Lange FN 01, 51-52; Kühme, *Königtum*, 187-188.

[38] For the seven or twelve heaps remaining from the snake killed by Bayajidda see Nicolas, *Dynamique*, 63, 227, 347, and Krieger, *Geschichte*, 19.

[39] KTU 1.2 IV 11-24, VI 50-53; Wyatt, *Religious Texts*, 65-67, 144-145; Pritchard, *Texts*, 61-68; Kühme, *Königtum*, 188-189.

[40] Nicolas, *Dynamique*, 363-365; Boyd, "Sallah in Gobir", 594; Lange, FN 01, 53-54; Kühme, *Königtum*, 194-197.

it has to be remembered that the ram was provided by Sarkin Annā and that both Sarkin Annā and the king consecrated it for sacrifice. Just as Sarkin Makera forges the weapons, Sarkin Annā provides an animal symbolising his own deity for the creation combat. On the cult-mythological level the sacrifice of the ram parallels Marduk's killing of Tiamat, which was likewise re-enacted in the Babylonian New Year festival.[41] But while, according to the Babylonian creation epos *Enuma elish*, the splitting of her body gave rise to heaven and earth and the dissection of the various portions of her corpse to clouds, rivers, springs and mountains, the cutting-up of the ram only provides blessings to the believers without further explanations. Apparently up to the present day the people of Gobir perform a cult-dramatic creation combat of which the Muslims, by just slaughtering a ram or a camel during the pilgrimage of Mecca, preserve only the final act.[42] On the basis of the biblical Isaac story (Gen 22: 2-14) and the parallel *iwo* sacrifice during the Itapa festival of Ife[43] – where the high priest of Obameri/Môt consecrates the victim immolated by the high priest of Obatala/Baal in the netherworld grove of Obatala[44] – it can be assumed that earlier the sacrificial animal was a human being. By merging their own traditions with the injunctions of Islam, the Gobirawa perpetuate the original cultic context out of which the main ritual of Islam drew its prime inspiration.

Subsequently the procession moves around the town by the east and the north, enters it from the north and reaches the palace from the west. During the king's absence the Priestess Inna and her followers from the Bori cult take possession of the palace. When the king returns to the central place of the town, several ceremonies are performed there before he enters the palace.[45] Then the Inna arrives with her Bori followers and does homage to the king before sitting down in the front room. The officials pass by her and do homage to her before they do the same to the king. Next the king retires to his harem with his wives. After some time he comes back to the throne hall, receiving again the homage of his people. Subsequently the Inna and her lady followers come and in successive small groups join the newly withdrawn king.[46] At this point the cultic performance of the sacred marriage becomes realistic: the king having first been alone with his wives, later stays with the high priestess Inna and her followers. Certain characteristics of the Inna of Gobir should be noted in order to understand the mythological

[41] Frankfort, *Kingship*, 327-329; Moortgat, *Tammuz*, 134-142.

[42] Wensinck, "Hādjdj", EI², III, 34-38; Daum, *Religion*, 128.

[43] Cf. Stevens, "Orisha-nla", 193-197; FN 00, 93-95 (own observations).

[44] It should be noted that in Ife and in Gobir the victim is handed over by the cult party of the netherworld to the cult party of the upperworld.

[45] Kühme, *Königtum*, 201-202.

[46] Kühme, *Königtum*, 196-203. See also Nicolas, *Dynamique*, 263-265.

significance of her cult-dramatic behaviour: she represents Takurabow or *Innà Bakà* "the Black Inna", the dynastic goddess of Gobir, she often wears male dresses and she is considered to be the sister and consort of the king.[47] Although nothing precise is known about the earthly incarnation of Anat, similar features are known to have characterized the consort of Baal.[48] In the absence of the Baal-like king, the Inna is the one who reigns over the country. When the king comes back from the chaos combat, the incarnated goddess offers herself in a sacred marriage to the victorious hero, thus ensuring the deification of her partner.

Apparently the cult-drama of Gobir refers to cult-mythological features similar to those lying behind the ancient Near Eastern New Year festival: the hero leaves his palace and enters into the netherworld, he arms himself with special weapons, kills the chaos monster, is resurrected from the netherworld and celebrates a sacred marriage. Like the divine kings of the ancient Near East, the king of Gobir thus ensured the annual renewal of his deification. The perpetuation of this Semitic cult-mythological pattern is not restricted to Africa. It can likewise be detected in the mythology that gave rise to the Christian celebrations of Easter and in the cult-dramatic performances of the Muslims during the pilgrimage at Mecca.[49] In one way or another all these festivities are derived from the concept of a violent act of creation. This act had to be repeated year after year in order to guarantee not only the rule of particular divine kings, but also in order to ensure the continuity of the cosmic order.

3. The Social Dimensions of the Bayajidda Legend

Another important aspect of the Bayajidda legend concerns the classification of the major Central Sudanic societies into the categories of "Hausā" and "Banzā". The legend explains that the founders of the *Hausà Bakwài* "the seven Hausā" states and the *Banzà bakwài* "seven Banzā" states descend from the sons of the two wives of the hero: the younger founder of the Hausa states from the Queen of Daura and the elder founder of the Banzà states from the queen's female slave, given to the hero as a concubine.

It is often supposed that linguistic criteria distinguish the Hausā from the Banzà states, the former being composed of Hausa-speakers and the latter of non-Hausa speakers.[50] Two arguments undermine this linguistic explanation.

[47] Nicolas, *Dynamique*, 340-342; Lange, "Neujahrsfest", 131-132; Kühme, *Königtum*, 82-87.

[48] Wyatt, *Religious Texts*, 310 n. 267; Lange, "Neujahrsfest", 136-149.

[49] Daum, *Religion*, 108-130; Mettinger, *Riddle of Resurrection*, 220-221.

[50] Barth, *Travels*, I, 472; Smith, "Beginnings", 343; Hogben/Kirk-Greene, *Emirates*, 149.

The first relates to Kebbi and Zamfara, two states belonging to the seven Banzā. While Kebbi might have been Songhay-speaking in ancient times, the core of Zamfara was certainly Hausa-speaking for as long as the seven Hausā states were. The second argument against a linguistic criterion for this dichotomy is also related to the Bayajidda narrative. Indeed, the oral version of the legend makes it clear that the elder son of the founding hero did not emigrate to other areas since he continued to fulfill important functions within the kingship of Daura. Just as the hero and the Queen of Daura have their present-day incarnations in the form of specific titleholders, so too has the elder son of the dragon-killer. This is not only true for Daura but also for Gobir and Katsina, two other states of the seven Hausā. In all three states the titleholders representing the elder son of the hero – Magajin Bayamadi, Sarkin Annā and Durbi – preside over one section of Hausa society variously called Aznā, Arnā, Annā, or Maguzawa.[51] Since the members of the Aznā section must have been Hausa-speaking for as long as the members of the Hausā section proper, the distinction between the "seven Hausā" and the "seven Banzā" states cannot have originated from a difference in language.[52]

What then could have given rise to the Hausā-Banzā dichotomy? The answer is again to be found in the pre-Islamic cult-mythological sphere. Without going into details here, it should be noted that within the surviving Bori cult groups of Hausaland, there are two different categories of inherited spirits. They are called the black and the white, the pagan and the Muslim, the Aznā and the Hausā, and correspond either to earlier netherworld or upperworld deities.[53] Furthermore, the names of many Bori spirits are identical with those of the prominent political offices of the Hausa states. Most anthropologists suppose that the Bori spirits and their designations were copied from the prestigious political offices. In fact, it is more likely that these are two sets of correlated survivals – the spirits and the offices – who owe their existence to a form of pre-Islamic divine kingship in which the main officials were priests and priestesses presiding over the cults of individual deities.[54] The Bayajidda legend mentions the figures of Magajiya, Bagwariya, Galadima and Kaura corresponding to specific Bori spirits and to Islamized state offices.[55] In comparing the legend with the Bori tradition it is clear that the

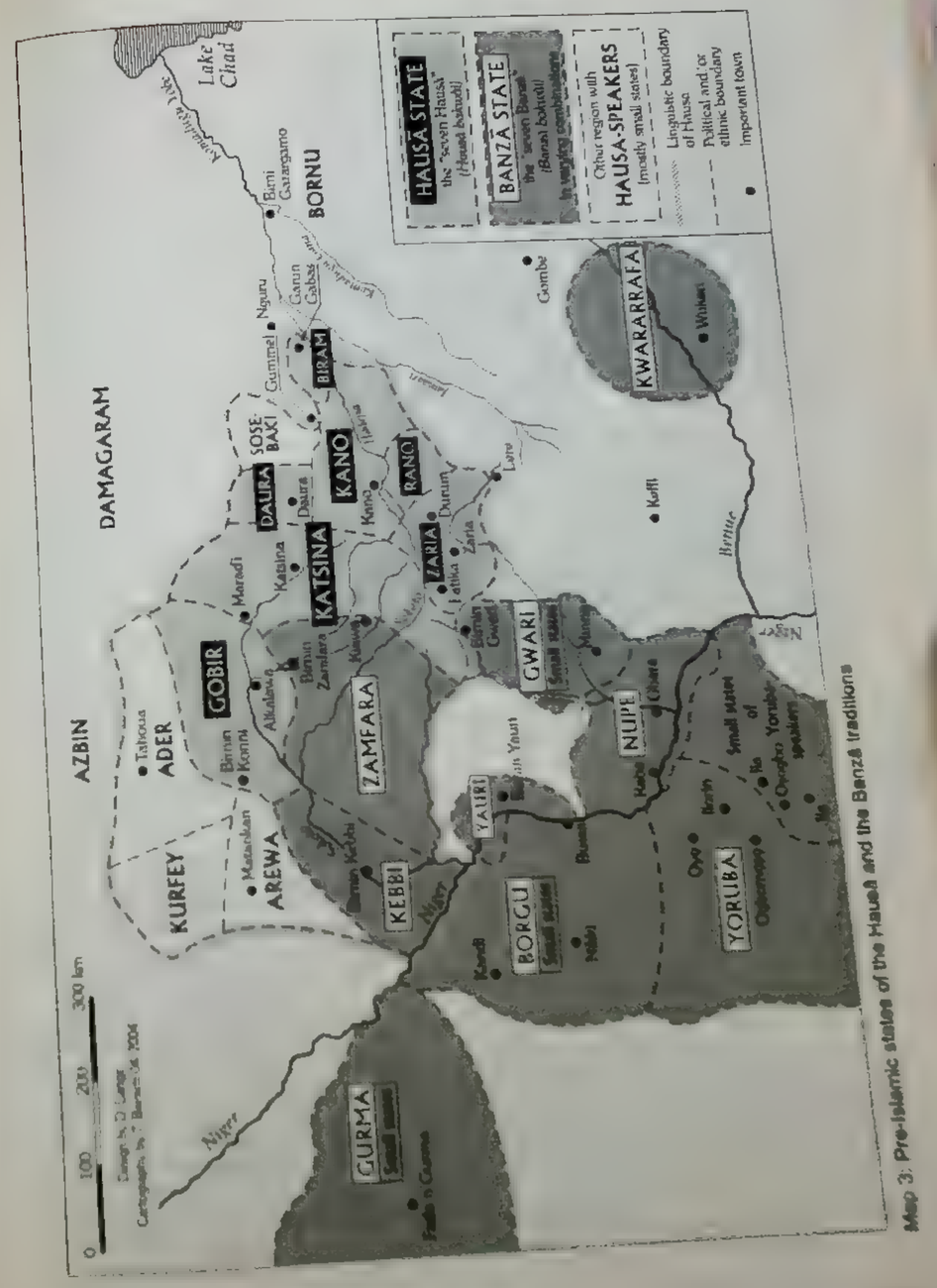
[51] Smith, *Daura*, 57, 133; Nicolas, *Dynamique*, 64-65, 381-382.

[52] For further details, see Lange, "Gründung der Hausastaaten", 31-33.

[53] Cf. Tremearne, *Ban of Bori*, 247, 296-353; Greenberg, *Influence*, 29; Krieger, "Notizen", 97; Nicolas, *Dynamique*, 317-318; Besmer, *Horses*, 63. The distinction between netherworld and upperworld deities can only be indirectly inferred.

[54] Cf. Nicolas, *Dynamique*, 312-337; Besmer, *Horses*, 62-120; Lange, "Neujahrsfest", 130-134, 156-158.

[55] The spirit Bagwariya is considered to be a slave identical to Boboniya and Bagulma (Tremearne, *Ban of Bori*, 388-390; Échard, *Génies*, 45-47). As we have seen above, the legen-



Map 3: Pre-Islamic states of the Hausā and the Banzā traditions

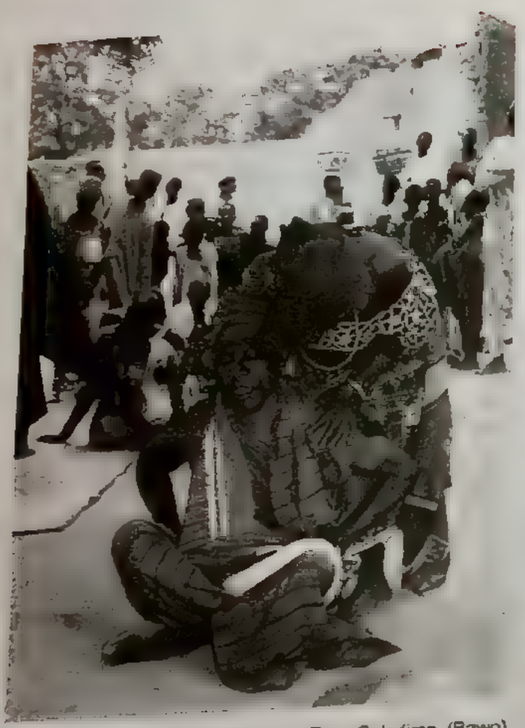


Photo 2: Magajiya bewails her son Dan Galadima (Bawo) whom she shares with Bagwariya/ Bagulma, Argungu 1997

remnant cult-mythology of Bori in Kebbi and in Gobir reveals (by associating Magajiya and Bagwariya/Bagulma to a boy of outstanding importance called Dan Galadima or Mamman/Bawa) surprising parallels with the Bayajidda narrative and thus allows to perceive the mythological background behind the legend.[56] These and other considerations make it clear that the value of the Bayajidda narrative as an historical source lies first and foremost in its character as an oral foundation charter for Hausa society based on an earlier broadly shared cult-mythological worldview that permeated all aspects of society.[57]

Earlier Bori practitioners played central roles in the performance of the festival. Although in Daura they still participate in the main processions, they are so marginal nowadays that it is difficult to ascertain their original contributions to the festal performances. Only in Gobir do the Bori adepts still significantly participate in the main celebrations. Together with the Inna they enter the palace once the king has left it, then they follow the king to the prayer ground. Once the prayer is finished they run in front of the cavalcade

dary figure Bagwariya is related to the office of Iya/Inna (see above pp. 221-229). For the other spirits and offices the parallel names clearly indicate earlier connections with a precise state office (Lange, "Dimension", 182-193; Kühme, *Konigtum*, 63-92).

[56] Lange, "Dimension", 184-185; *id.*, "Neujahrsfest", 131-134.

[57] These results are based on field research by the author in the years 1997, 2000 and 2001 (FN 97, 16-22; FN 00, 9-27; FN 01, 3-75).

around the town back to the palace.[58] Moreover, as a result of the integration of the festival into the Islamic lunar calendar and its disconnection from the solar year and hence from the agricultural cycle, it has lost its former relevance for the pre-Islamic religion of fertility.

Yet, in the southern suburb of Daura some Bori adepts continue to celebrate the *shàn* or *fasà kàbewà*, the "drinking" or "breaking of the pumpkin" festival in December. At the height of the festivities the mediums of Sarkin Rafi, the Hausa Baal, and three other white deities, smash one big pumpkin after another. They thus appease the deities and ensure that the New Year will be fruitful and beneficial.[59] In Kano, Katsina and Zaria, three other states of the *Hausà bakwai*, the pumpkin is likewise smashed by a medium of the white deity Sarkin Rafi. The Bori adepts consider this performance to be highly dangerous, since they believe that black spirits might interfere and cause the medium of Sarkin Rafi to break his neck.[60]

It is tempting to associate the smashing of the pumpkin during the New Year festival with the egg-shaped primordial entity called Mót in the cosmogony of Philo of Byblos and with the splitting of the same Mót by Anat in the Baal Cycle.[61] In Canaanite societies a ceremony re-enacting the smashing of Mót in the form of an egg-shaped fruit might have been performed parallel to the immolation of Yamm in the form of a human being. A Yoruba myth combines the two concepts by relating the struggle between Obatala and Oduduwa within a primordial calabash, the bursting of the calabash, and the subsequent creation of heaven and earth.[62]

In the states of the *Banza bakwai*, the relationship between the deities is reversed. In Kebbi, the two leading priests of the festival were the mediums of black deities. One of them prepared the pumpkin to be cut by a servant without any interference from a white deity.[63] Unfortunately, no data is available for the *shan kabewa* festival of Zamfara. However, with respect to the palace and the royal house of Zamfara, we know that black deities were in a more prominent position than white deities in that state. The latter appear to have had their focal

[58] FN 01, 56; Nicolas, *Dynamique*, 365. During the last years of the twentieth century, the Bori adepts stayed together with the Inna in the palace (Kuhme, *Konigtum*, 193).

[59] Bargery, *Dictionary*, 927; FN 01, 31, 37-41, 45-47.

[60] Besmer, *Horses*, 79, 134; FN 01, 35-36, 71-73.

[61] Philo 10 2 (Attridge/Oden, *Philo of Byblos*, 37) and KTU 1.6 II 31-35, V 12-19 (Wyatt, *Religious Texts*, 135-136, 141).

[62] Ellis, *Peoples*, 41-42; Frobenius, *Cotterdéme*, 119.

[63] Harris, *Provincial Gazetteer*, 356-357; FN 01, 65-67.

point in Galadima, the former chief judge and second in command.[64] A similar inversion of the deities belonging to the upperworld and netherworld prevails among the Yoruba, another state of the *Banzā bakwài*, where Oduduwa and his followers predominate over Obatala and his supporters.[65] These examples tend to show that the distinction between the *Hausā bakwài* and the *Banzā bakwài* was of a cult-mythological nature and depended on the prevalence in each particular state of either white or black deities, belonging respectively to the upperworld or the netherworld.

While among the Hausa the predominance of a particular set of deities can mainly be recognised in the New Year festival, among the Yoruba of Ife it can also be detected in palace organization.[66] That similar distinctions were made in Ugarit could perhaps be inferred from the concept of a "divine council" composed of "divine families".[67] Of these families the "sons of Athirat" appear to correspond in terms of the Hausa dichotomy to the netherworld deities of the Banzā or Aznā category, while the "house of Baal" seems to resemble the upperworld deities of the Hausā category, properly speaking.[68] Among the Yoruba the opposite group of deities prevailed. In both societies the legends of origin give an adequate expression of prevalent cult-mythological realities.

In view of the historical significance of social and cultural parallels between the Hausa and Yoruba societies on one side and the world of the Canaanites on the other, etymologies should not be systematically discarded. Two examples may suffice.[69] Most likely the Hausa term *bòrī* ("cult of spirit-possession"), the Yoruba *ebora* ("deity" or "spirit of an ancestor") and the cognate *abore* ("priest of a deity") are derived from the Hebrew *bôr* ("cistern" and hence "entrance to the netherworld").[70] The other example concerns the name Aznā and hence also Banzā (Ba-nzā). Apparently these designations are connected with the main epithet of Môt *'az* ("strong") and also with the biblical demon 'Azazel mentioned in

[64] Krieger, "Notizen", 99-111. Since the application of the *shari'a* in Zamfara, the practice of Bori has virtually been eliminated in the state (FN 01, 51-52).

[65] Lange, "Ursprung des Bösen", 9-13. See below pp. 347-351.

[66] Lange, "Preservation", 131-135.

[67] Del Olmo Lete, *Canaanite Religion*, 217-218; Smith, *Origins of Monotheism*, 41-66; Lange, "Ursprung des Bösen", 15.

[68] By distinguishing between astral and underworld deities, Day includes the moon among the former (*Yahweh*, 163-166).

[69] For the analysis of the names of the main legendary Hausa and Yoruba figures see Lange, "Dimension", 184-193; *id.*, "Erbe, I", 87-121. However, Oduduwa should not be identified with the legendary figure Didánu (*ibid.*, 87-92) but with the deity Dôd/Yamm (Lange, "Jesus", 7; *id.*, "Ursprung des Bösen", 9-13).

[70] Lange, "Erbe, II", 135-136; Tromp, *Conceptions*, 66-69; HAL, I, 111-112.

contrast to Yahweh.[71] In addition to the structural parallels detectable within the cult-mythology of two Central Sudanic societies and Canaan-Israel with respect to the deities of the upperworld and the netherworld, the correspondences in words and things show that the two culture areas concerned must once have been in intensive contact with each other.

4. Reflections of the Canaanite-Israelite Mythology in the Oral Traditions of the Central Sudan

The historical traditions of the Central Sudan likewise contain clear evidence of Canaanite-Israelite influences. Beginning with the Bayajidda legend itself we note a number of parallels with the biblical narrative of Abraham, Sarah and Hagar which are certainly not due to coincidence. In both cases a stranger marries a queen – in the Bible the royal status of Sarah is indicated by the change of her name from Sarai to Sarah (princess) and the promise to be the "mother of nations" and to have an offspring of kings (Gen 17: 15-16). Both depict an elderly legal wife who gives to her husband a young female slave who becomes pregnant first and bears a male child. In both cases, the ethnic groups of the regional world concerned are either classified as descendants of this female slave and her son or of the legal wife of the hero and her son – here the *Hausā bakwai* and the *Banzā bakwài*, there the Israelites and the Arabs. In each tradition cult-dramatic performances staged during the main annual festival re-enact the principal features of the legend: in Daura, the killing of the dragon and the marriage of the hero with the queen; in Mecca, the stoning of Satan and the sacrifice of a ram; among the Jews, the blowing of the horn in remembrance of Abraham's prevented sacrifice.[72]

Although the three Abrahamic religions consider the patriarch and his main offspring to have been present in their respective core areas, Israel and Mecca, they are aware that the beliefs of the Judeo-Christians and the Muslims pertaining to the activities of these figures are mutually exclusive. The spread of the narrative to the Central Sudan, where the name Abraham changed to Biram, the first son of the hero,[73] adds a third dimension to the diffusion of the patriarchal legend.[74]

[71] Day, *Yahweh*, 187-188. For 'Azazel see the dichotomy between Yahweh and a demonic deity called *Azā'zēl* ("fierce god") in Lev 16: 7-10, which can be equated with an opposition between Yahweh and Môt (Tawil, "'Azazel", 58-59; HAL, III, 762).

[72] Gaudefroy-Demombynes, *Pèlerinage*, 225-230, 268-272; Firestone, *Journeys*, 105-151; Fahd, "Sa'y", EP, IX, 97; Gaster, *Festivals*, 111; Silbermann, "'Aqedah", in: Zwi Werblowsky/Wigoder, *Dictionary*, 58-59.

[73] Lange, "Dimension", 186, 198.

[74] Lange, "Hausa-Traditionen", 56 n. 51; *id.*, "Dimension", 198-199.

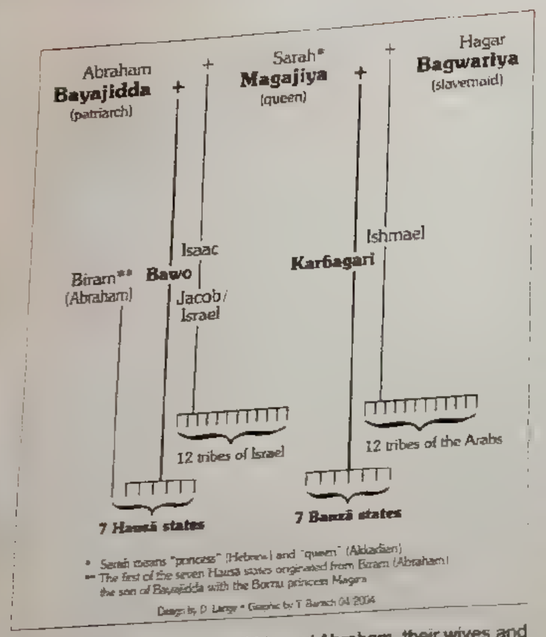


Chart 1: The patriarchs Bayajidda and Abraham, their wives and their offspring

However, in this case the cult-mythological underpinning of the legend is still clearly recognisable. Judging from the cultic significance of the Bayajidda legend it may be assumed that the story of Abraham was in Israel and Arabia likewise based on religious phenomena of a pre-monotheistic nature.

Going one step further, we may even identify another reflection of the Abraham story, with the familiar inversion, among the Yoruba of Ife. Here two women are said to have been wives of Oduduwa, the rich Olokun who had no children (Sarah), and the poor Osaara who was blessed with many children (Hagar).[75] The inversion consists in this case of the attribution of the *šarà* title-name to the child-bearing Hagar. Similarly the apostle Paul uses the biblical descent pattern by claiming that the Christians as free beings are related to Sarah, while the Jews as slaves of the Law are children of Hagar (Gal 4: 22-30). Notwithstanding the childlessness of Olokun, her festival is connected to the dispersion of the sixteen chiefs of Ife who became the founders of certain Yoruba towns in the east, in contrast to the towns founded by the sixteen sons of Oduduwa (and Osaara ?) in the west.[76] The dichotomy between the sons of Olokun and those of

[75] Fabunmi, *Ife Shrines*, 4-6, 22; Parratt, "Approach", 342-343. Similarly Paul insists on the contrast between the numerous children of Hagar and the few descendants of Sarah (Gal 4: 27). In Genesis the contrast is less apparent (Gen 16: 10 and 18: 10, 14).

[76] With respect to Olokun, Parratt mentions the towns and regions of Ekiti, Akure, Idanre, Ilare ("Approach", 342-343). According to Johnson the sons of Oduduwa founded Owu, Ketu, Benin, Ila, Sabe, Popo and Oyo (*History*, 7-8). All the former are situated in the east, while among the latter only Benin is situated in the east. It is consistent with this classification

Oduduwa is related to the distinction between the descendants of Obatala and Oduduwa since Olokun was a follower of Obatala. Therefore it may be supposed that the prevalent Obatala-Oduduwa opposition of the Yoruba corresponds to a certain degree to the opposition between Magajiya/Bawo and Bagwariya/Karbagari among the Hausa.

More significant for the Yoruba as a whole is the Oduduwa tradition of origin. Historians consider the legend up to now simply as an oral text without taking into consideration its cult-mythological dimension. According to the orally transmitted story, Oduduwa, the original founder of the Yoruba states, came from Mecca to West Africa where he settled at Ile Ife. Later his seven or sixteen sons or grandsons dispersed from Ile Ife and established the major kingdoms of the Yoruba including Benin beyond the area of Yoruba-speaking peoples.[77] Another set of stories presents Oduduwa as a deity who created the earth in Ile Ife at the instigation of his father, the high god Olodumare.[78] From the more detailed Ife mythology, it appears that Olodumare first instructed his elder son Obatala to create the earth. On the way down to the primeval ocean Obatala got drunk on palmwine and fell asleep. His younger brother Oduduwa took the opportunity to steal the sacred items and to begin the act of creation in his stead.[79] When Obatala awoke and realized that his brother had betrayed him, he began to quarrel with him and thus initiated the everlasting creation combat between his own followers and those of his brother. Until recently, members of the Oduduwa party re-enacted this by throwing palmwine on the procession road of the Obatala people.[80]

The conflict-stricken relations between the two great cult parties of Ife clearly indicate that the Ife creation myth expresses the same antagonistic world view as the Bayajidda legend and the related cult-mythology of the Hausa do. Even the two divine parties can be shown to correspond to the same categories of deities: among the Hausa the deities of the upperworld are called "Hausā", "Muslim" or "white" and among the Yoruba "followers of Obatala", while the deities of the netherworld are called among the Hausa "Aznà, Annā" or "black" and among the Yoruba "followers of Oduduwa". As the deities of the upper and netherworld stand according to the legendary tradition either behind Bawo/Isaac-Jacob

that the Olokun cult group belongs to the Obatala party and that the Edena gate on the eastern side of the palace was under their supervision (FN 02, 28, 62, 132), while the Osaara cult group belongs to the Oranle party (Jimoh/Emese FN 00, 1"2; Obalaran FN 02, "4).

[77] Johnson, *History*, 3-9; Law, "Heritage of Oduduwa", 208-213.

[78] Johnson, *History*, 143; Law, "Heritage of Oduduwa", 209-210.

[79] Frobenius, *Und Afrika*, 285-287; Idowu, *Olodumare*, 18-26.

[80] See below 358-366. The elimination of the Obameri grove by the extension of the town makes future re-enactments of this scene virtually impossible (Lange, "Preservation", 148-149).

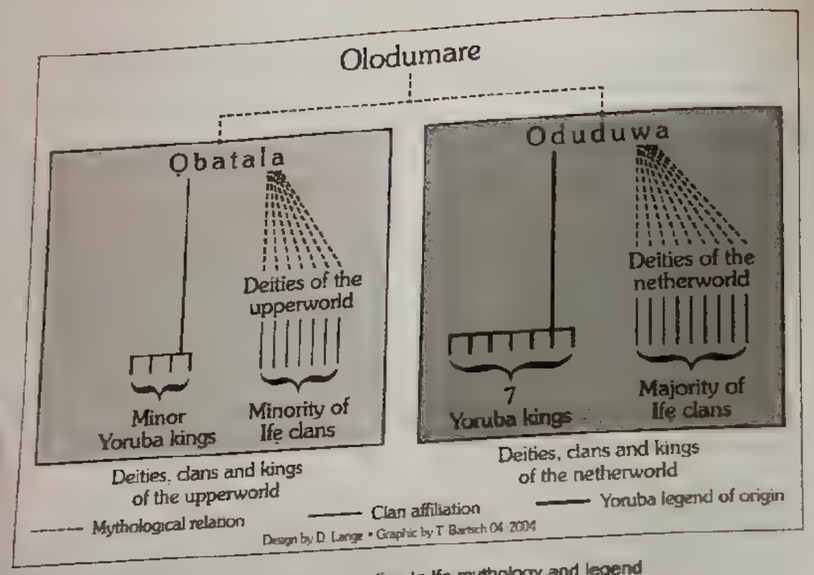


Chart 2: Kings and clans of the Yoruba according to Ife mythology and legend

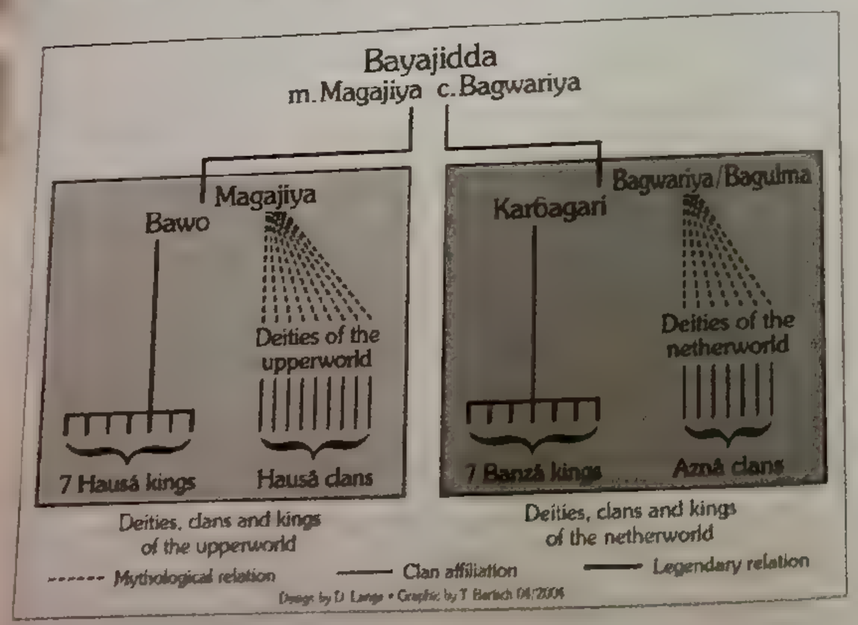


Chart 3: Kings and clans of the Central Sudan according to Daura mythology and legend

or Karbagari/Ishmael, and according to the mythical tradition either behind Obatala/Baal or Oduduwa/Yamm,[81] it is clear that the overall mythologies, clan structures and kingship traditions of the Hausa and the Yoruba belong to the same Canaanite-Israelite pattern.

The most elaborate historical legends of the Yoruba are those of the great northern kingdom of Oyo. They offer a complex example of the shaping of a mythologized historical tradition in a dualistic fashion. Indeed, the oral record in this case is characterized by an intriguing combination of Israelite and Assyrian elements grafted onto the Canaanite dichotomy of two cult-mythological parties. As in all Yoruba communities we find in Oyo a number of cult groups divided into an Oduduwa/Yamm and an Obatala/Baal section. The oral record of Oyo begins with Oduduwa, the legendary ancestor of the Yoruba. From the cultic situation in Ife, the holy city of the Yoruba, it is obvious that this well-known ancestral figure corresponds to a humanized god. Being the leader of the major party of deities he – and not his defeated opponent Obatala – was predestined to become the great ancestor of the Yoruba.[82] According to the organizational pattern of Ife clans, his son Oranmiyan was one of the leading members of the Oduduwa party.[83]

All following figures of the Oyo king list apparently belong to the world of human beings. Ajaka, the third and fifth figure of the oral list, must be seen in conjunction with the intermediate Sango, the most famous ruler of Oyo, who after his death is supposed to have been deified as the god of thunder. Sango's intrusion into the reign of Ajaka and other elements of his tradition indicate a foreign occupation of Israel. Having a closer look at the history of Israel, we find that Isaac can be considered as an epoch-ruler whose long reign was most likely interrupted by the conquest of Salmanassar III in 841 B.C. and the subsequent three years' Assyrian occupation of the country.[84] While the name of Ajaka seems to correspond to Isaac, the name Sango was apparently derived from the priestly *šangû*-title applied to the Assyrian kings who represented the god of thunder Bel-Aššur. During the New Year festival, when the divine king incarnated the thunder-god, the common people may easily have taken the name of the king for that of the god.[85] The subsequent four rulers appear to belong alternately to the Assyrian line

[81] On the identification of Obatala with Baal/Melqart/Yahweh and Oduduwa with Yamm-Dôd/Môdud, see Lange, "Jesus", 7; *id.*, "Ursprung des Bösen", 9-16, and below pp. 354-358.

[82] Johnson, *History*, 3-7, 143; *id.*, „Ursprung des Bösen", 9-13. See also below pp. 354-358.

[83] Fabunmi, *Genesis*, 83; id., *Ife Shrines*, 15-17.

[84] Astour, "Assyrian invasion", 383-389; Thiel, "Jehu", ABD, III, 670-673.

[85] Lange, "Wettergott Schango", 222-230; *id.*, "Erbe, II", 81-99.

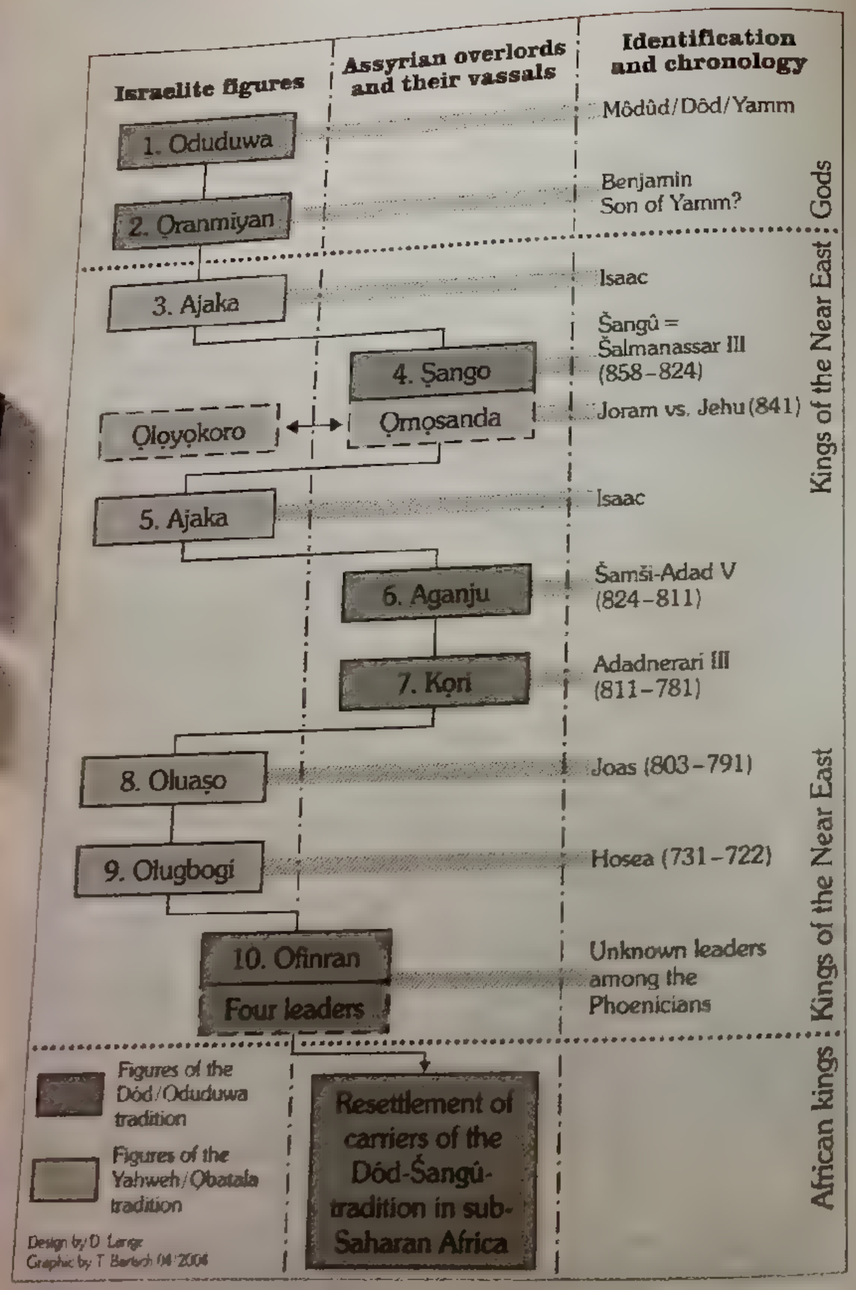


Chart 4: Legendary kings of the Oyo-Yoruba according to their cult-mythological classification

of conquerors and to the Israelite line of local kings, with Olugbogi being perhaps identical with Hosea (731-722 BC) – the last king before the final break-up of the Israelite state.[86] The next five leaders probably represent the North African transition period between the destruction of the Israelite state and the final settlement in Yorubaland of a group of Israelites with strong Canaanite tendencies.

Deriving their legitimacy from Oduduwa/Dód – and not from Obatala/Melqart (as some minor Yoruba kings do)[87] – and linking themselves to certain Assyrian and hence foreign figures, the Oyo rulers apparently belong to a Canaanite tradition of kingship rooted in the pre-eminence of the primordial god – as opposed to the tradition of the god of violent creation.[88] A similar dualistic cult-mythology seems to have predominated in the Phoenician cities of the Near East, where in Ugarit and Tyre the deities of the upperworld apparently prevailed, while those of the netherworld had authority in Sidon and Beirut.[89] Three elements show that information on the early history of Oyo was transmitted primarily because its most significant details were considered to be related to the two parties of the creation conflict.[90] First, both available accounts of Oyo history begin with the creation of the world – even though in one case, there is a demythologized version as well.[91] Second, we notice that it was a snake – the animal symbol of the Dód/Yamm-party – which led Oranmiyan to the appropriate site of his future capital.[92] Third, both accounts refer to a skull ritual performed in the Oyo palace in commemoration of a number of defeated vassals representing Obatala.[93] Apart from the striking parallel to a particular incident recorded by the Book of Kings with respect to the treatment of the vanquished Omride dynasty of Israel by the pro-Assyrian usurper Jehu, we find in the ritual a remarkable instance of respect shown by the victorious rebels, associated with the Oduduwa cultic tradition, towards the vanquished local rulers identified with Obatala.[94] In

[86] Lange, "Erbe, II", 99-102.

[87] Such as the kings of Ogbomoso, Ijigbo, Ifon, Ikire and Oba Akure (Idowu, *Olodumare*, 16, 75, 153; Verger, "Ijigbo", 208; Orisatoyinbo/Adediran, *History*, 3).

[88] On this difference with respect to the creation conflict see Lange, "Ursprung des Bösen", 4-26.

[89] Philo of Byblos 10. 10; 10. 28. 10. 35 (Attridge/Oden, *Philo of Byblos*, 22, 28, 57); Baal Cycle, KTU 1.1.-1.6. (Wyatt, *Religious Texts*, 36-145); Lipinski, *Dieux*, 116-122, 226-243.

[90] For the importance of the creation conflict for Israelite political conceptions see Day, *God's Conflict*, 88-140.

[91] Hess, *Ame nègre*, 119-122; Johnson, *History*, 9, 143.

[92] Johnson, *History*, 11.

[93] Hess, *Ame nègre*, 146; Johnson, *History*, 152, 154.

[94] Jehu ordered the heads of the slaughtered Omrids to be put in two piles at the entrance of the city gate (2 Ki 10: 6-88, 11). For the Biblical comparison see Johnson, *History*, 154; Lange, "Erbe, II", 84-86.

general however, the kings of Oyo insisted on their Oduduwa/Dôd identity by incorporating a number of Assyrian rulers into their essentially Israelite list of patriarchal predecessors. A similar projection of cultic dualism into history can be detected for Tyre where Samemroumos/Baal Šamem is considered to have rebelled against Usoos (Yamm?) and for Katsina where the dynastic founder Korau is said to have in a mock fight treacherously murdered Sanau, the last ruler of the royal Aznā clan descending from Karbagari/Ishmael.[95] In view of the preeminence of the Yamm/Oduduwa tradition in the historical records of Oyo, in the cultic setting of Ife and more generally in the legend of origin common to all Yoruba states, it is certainly not by accident that the Bayajidda legend places the Yoruba into the category of the Banzā and not into that of the Hausā states.

5. Reflections of the Canaanite-Israelite Dualistic World View in the Written Records of the Central Sudan

Four states of the Niger-Chad region have the benefit of written historical records of particular depth which are open to comparison with evidence from the Canaanite-Israelite world: Kanem-Bornu, Kano, Kebbi and Zamfara.[96] Looking at them from the point of view of the dualistic cult-mythological pattern, we find a significant distribution of Israelite or anti-Israelite elements according to their classification as either Hausā or Banzā. This is clearly apparent from the *Kano Chronicle* and from the king lists of Kebbi and Zamfara, the first belonging to a Hausā state and the two others to Banzā states. The situation in Kanem-Bornu was more complex since in this case we observe that the cult-mythological structure of the kingdom changed in the course of history: having first been characterized by a Banzā constitution, the country experienced with the arrival of Islam a cultural revolution in the course of which the Hausā section of the society, instead of the Banzā section, became the leading force in the country. The evidence available for the history of Katsina appears at first sight to indicate a similar change of the clan structure.[97]

In terms of the Bayajidda legend, Bornu should on account of the hero's first son Biram be classified as a Hausā state. However, the earlier cult-mythological situation in the Chadic state was different. This is apparent from the fact that

[95] Philo of Byblos 10. 10 (Attridge/Oden, *Philo of Byblos*, 43, 82-83); Palmer, "History of Katsina", 221; Hogben/Kirk-Greene, *Emirates*, 157-158; Nicolas, *Dynamique*, 65.

[96] The early kings of Katsina and Gobir could not be identified, although, according to the list of Gobir, 52 out of 125 kings ruled outside the Niger-Chad region (Hogben/Kirk-Greene, *Emirates*, 181-182; 415-417).

[97] See below pp. 250-252.

the Chronicle of Kanem-Bornu introduces two concepts of origin: one turns the South Arabian hero Sayf b. Dhī Yazan of the late pre-Islamic period into the great ancestral figure of the Chadic state, and the other proposes a genealogical link of the Kanem-Bornu rulers with the long line of biblical patriarchs down to Abraham and Ishmael. Although it is documented as early as the thirteenth century, the connection with Sayf b. Dhī Yazan is certainly due to Islamic feedback.[98] It might have resulted from the attempt to turn an earlier clan deity called Sef – perhaps identical with the Arabic-Canaanite Isāf and the Canaanite Baal Safon[99] – into a legendary figure by identifying it, on account of the similarity of names, with the Yemenite hero Sayf (b. Dhī Yazan). The genealogical list at the beginning of the Chronicle further refers to the mother of the hero as a princess of Baghdad. An ancient legend calls this princess Aisha and depicts her as a great ancestral figure having several sons. The first, Ngalma Duku, was the ancestor of the Duguwa, the first dynasty of Kanem-Bornu, and the second, Sef, the ancestor of the Sefuwa, the second dynasty. Having vanquished his elder brother in a mock fight and accidentally killed him, Sef became ruler of the kingdom.[100] This incident would seem to refer to the great cultural revolution of Kanem which resulted in the demise of the Duguwa and the rise of the Sefuwa around 1068 AD. Earlier scholarship considers the advent of the Sefuwa as a dynastic change.[101] Yet, to conceive the Duguwa and the Sefuwa merely as two dynasties or two royal houses misses the cultural dimension of the upheaval of 1068 AD. does not take into account the resurgence of the Duguwa or Zaghāwa state in the fourteenth century, and disregards the dualistic social organization common to the Kanuri and Hausa societies.[102]

The second concept of origin refers to biblical ancestors. It starts with Adam and mentions all the patriarchs down to Abraham and Ishmael with the exception of one. It further adds seventeen Arabic names including Quraysh, the ancestor of the Prophet Muhammad, but these names, being incompatible with southern and northern Arabic genealogical figures, are clearly late artificial insertions.[103] Only

[98] Lange, *Diwān*, 22-23, 65. For the text of the thirteenth century Arab geographer Ibn Sa'id see *id.*, "Région du lac Tchad", 163, 168.

[99] For Isaf, the companion of Nā'ila, see Fahd, *Panthéon*, 175, and for Baal Saphon see Pope, "Baal Hadad", *in*: Haussig, *Wörterbuch*, 257-258.

[100] Legend of the "Five tribes of Kanem", Palmer, *Memoirs*, II, 83-84; Jäger, "Ursprungstradition", 198-199.

[101] Lange, "Progrès de l'Islam", 498-509; *id.*, "Ethnogenesis", 263-265; Hiskett, *Course of Islam*, 104-105.

[102] For the large identity between the Duguwa and the Zaghāwa see Lange, *Diwān*, 148-153, and for the return of the Zaghāy or Zaghāwa to power Lange, *Ethnogenesis*, 271-272.

[103] Lange, *Diwān*, 65 n. 7.

1. Adam
2. Seth
3. Enosh
4. Kenan (= Qenan)
5. Mahalalel
6. Zayd b. Mabrak (= Jared)
7. Enoch
8. Methuselah Matusalim
9. Lamak
10. Noah
11. Shem
12. Arphaxad
13. Shelah
14. Eber, *commander*
15. –
16. Arku (= Re'u)
17. Serug
18. Nahor
19. Azar, *brother of* Terah
20. Abraham
21. Ishmael

(followed by 17 Arabic names)

39. Sayf b. Dhī Yazan, *son of a princess of Baghdad (=Aisha)*

Design by D. Lange 09.1994

Chart 5: The patriarchs of Israel as legendary ancestors of the kings of Kanem-Bornu

the reference to Ishmael is highly significant as it indicates a non-Israelite line of descent, either among the northern Arabs or among the Phoenicians.[104] One might have expected that the earlier, purely biblical section of this genealogy was likewise copied from a late Arabic source. However some details make it likely that these names derive rather from an earlier internal written source than from any Muslim world history – although the latter also tend to begin with an account of the successive biblical patriarchs.[105] Most strikingly, the patriarch Methuselah is given the second, explanatory name Matusalim mentioned in early Christian literature but unknown to the biblical books and to Muslim authors.[106] Next, the importance of Eber, the eponymic ancestor of the Hebrews, is highlighted by the additional epithet "commander", although Muslim historians ignore the link of the name Eber with the ethnonym Hebrew and hence any outstanding quality of this patriarch.[107] Furthermore, the fourth patriarch is called Kenan in spite of the biblical form Qenan and a corresponding spelling in the Arabic chronicles. Similarly Re'u, the name of the sixteenth patriarch called Arghu by the Arab authors, is written Arku.[108] Support for the existence of a pre-Arabic version of the Chronicle of Kanem-Bornu comes from the Kanuri loanword

[104] For Ishmael as ancestor of the northern Arabs and as builder – together with Abraham – of the Ka'ba see Kor., 2: 125-127; Paret, "Ismā'īl", EI², IV, 193.

[105] For example al-Ya'qūbī, *Ta'rikh* (872), al-Tabarī, *Ta'rikh* (915) and Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil fī-ta'rikh* (1230).

[106] The name Matusalim first appears in the old church (*BHHW*, II, 1207). The Septuagint and the Vulgata have Mathusala.

[107] Num 24: 24 implies this qualification but Islamic authors do not mention it.

[108] Since the Chronicle of Bornu has an initial *kaf* in Qenān one may expect that it was based on a Greek text like the Septuagint which does not distinguish between *kaf* and *kof* (Luke 3: 37). The *kaf* in Arku (Hebrew: Re'u) may be explained by the Greek transcription of *ayin* by *gamma* (Luke 3: 35).

girgâm referring to both written and oral historical information and which seems to derive from *girginakku* "box for tablets, library", an Akkadian loanword from Sumerian.[109] Other Sumerian loanwords noted in Kanuri corroborate the hypothesis of ancient Near Eastern cultural influences reaching the region of Lake Chad via the Canaanites of North Africa.[110] Considering that the Ugaritic ancestors of these Canaanites also collected Sumerian documents in their archives, especially scribal exercises based on oral traditions,[111] it would not be surprising if similar traditions were once cherished in the Phoenician cities of North Africa and – why not – in their colonies south of the Sahara. Early Christian influences may have penetrated to the Central Sudan as a consequence of the political involvement of the Byzantine Empire in Fezzan in the second half of the sixth century.[112] The internal transmission of a biblical genealogy – perhaps successively in Hebrew and Greek – can hardly be interpreted other than as an indication of Israelite origins.

Inspite of the deep influence of Islam on Kanuri culture, there are also a number of legendary and institutional survivals which point to a considerable degree of earlier exposure to Canaanite-Israelite culture.[113] Most notably, the Chronicle of Kanem-Bornu, besides its claim of a Yemenite and Israelite origin of the ruling group, states that the first rulers of the kingdom were not black in complexion but "red as the Arab Bedouins". It is only from Salmama b. Abd Allāh (1176-1203) onwards that they are said to have been "very black".[114] Owing to the fact that Humē (1068-1080), the first Sefuwa ruler, belonged to an ancient local clan, the reference to white ancestors can hardly be related to Berbers.[115] It is certainly based on authentic traditions, although it does not necessarily refer to the twelfth century since mainly folk-etymological considerations seem to have

[109] CAD, V, 86-87. An illustration of a box in which the tablets were kept is to be found in: Meissner, *Babylonien*, II, 331 and ill. n° 44.

[110] Drexel, "Bornu und Sumer", 215-294; Lange, "Ursprung des Bösen", 4-6.

[111] The bibliography of Cunchillos lists 127 Sumerian and 765 Accadian texts (*Translitterale epigraphique*, 15-83). For the written and oral use of Sumerian in Ugarit see Krecher, "Schriftbeherrschulung in Ugarit", 132-133.

[112] For further details see below pp. 277-287 and Lange, "Slave trade" (in press).

[113] Lange, "Dimension", 171-172; Jäger, "Ursprungstraditionen", 197-200.

[114] Lange, *Diwān*, 70-71. For the slightly amended chronology see below p. 552.

[115] As I wrongly assumed earlier (*Diwān*, 98-99, 157; "Kingdoms of Chad", 239-243; "Ethnogenesis", 264-265).

led to the singling out of a specific Sefuwa ruler as being the first black king of Kanem.[116]

Above all, it should be observed that the chronicle insists on the importance of the patriarchal figure of Abraham, and in connection with him on the great significance of Sef and Dugu, thus indicating a dualistic social organization. Followed by Ishmael – and not Isaac – Abraham is the last great patriarch of the genealogical list. As a successor of Sef, he is again mentioned in the king list properly speaking in the sequence Sayf – Abraham – Dūkū.[117] In a legend of the sixteenth century, he is said to have led the migration to Kanem.[118] More recent legends insist on the important role of Dugu Bremmi, who can be identified due to his name and his burial place of Yeri Arfasan with the third figure of the king list, Dūkū b. Ibrāhīm.[119] According to legends he fought a war far to the south and left behind him a number of pagan descendants, the Mbum, the Tuburi, the Musgu and the Teda, some of whom were still tributaries of Bornu in the nineteenth century.[120] From the evidence presented so far, it appears that the Duguwa of Kanem-Bornu indeed occupied a position similar to that of the Aznā of Hausaland (especially in Katsina): they were descendants of Abraham, they were an internal and external ruling group and they stood in opposition to another ruling group.[121]

In comparative perspective, the evidence points to the antagonistic position between Sef and Dugu as parallel to the opposition between Bawo and Karbagari among the Hausa, Isaac-Jacob and Ishmael among the Israelites, and Obatala and Oduduwa among the Yoruba. Therefore it may be assumed that the Duguwa and the Sefuwa were two clans or groups of clans with mainly cult-mythological functions, one representing the deities of the netherworld and the other those of the upperworld. With the rise of Islam in the second half of the eleventh century, the party of upperworld deities naturally turned more easily to the new religion than

---

[116] Moreover, it should be noted that Kanuri speakers are tempted to derive Salmama from *salam* "black".

[117] Lange, *Diwān*, 65-66.

[118] Ibn Furtū, *K. ghazawāt Kānem*; transl. Palmer, *Memoirs*, I, 15. According to the *Girgam*, Sayf was burried in Kanem (Lange, *Diwān*, 66).

[119] Barth notes that the Kanuri situate Yeri Arfasa in the Musgu country, *Travels*, II, 581. See also Palmer, *Memoirs*, II, 103-107, and Lange, *Diwān*, 66.

[120] Legend of "Mai Dugu Bremmi", *in:* Palmer, *Memoirs*, II, 106-107; Last, "Early kingdoms", 192-193. The Tuburi, Musgu and Mbum inhabit a region situated 300 to 400 km south of Lake Chad. The Teda live north and northeast of the lake up to the mountains of Tibesti.

[121] The Arab geographers appear to have called them first Zaghāwa and later Zaghāy (Lange, *Diwān*, 151-153; *id.*, "Ethnogenesis", 265).

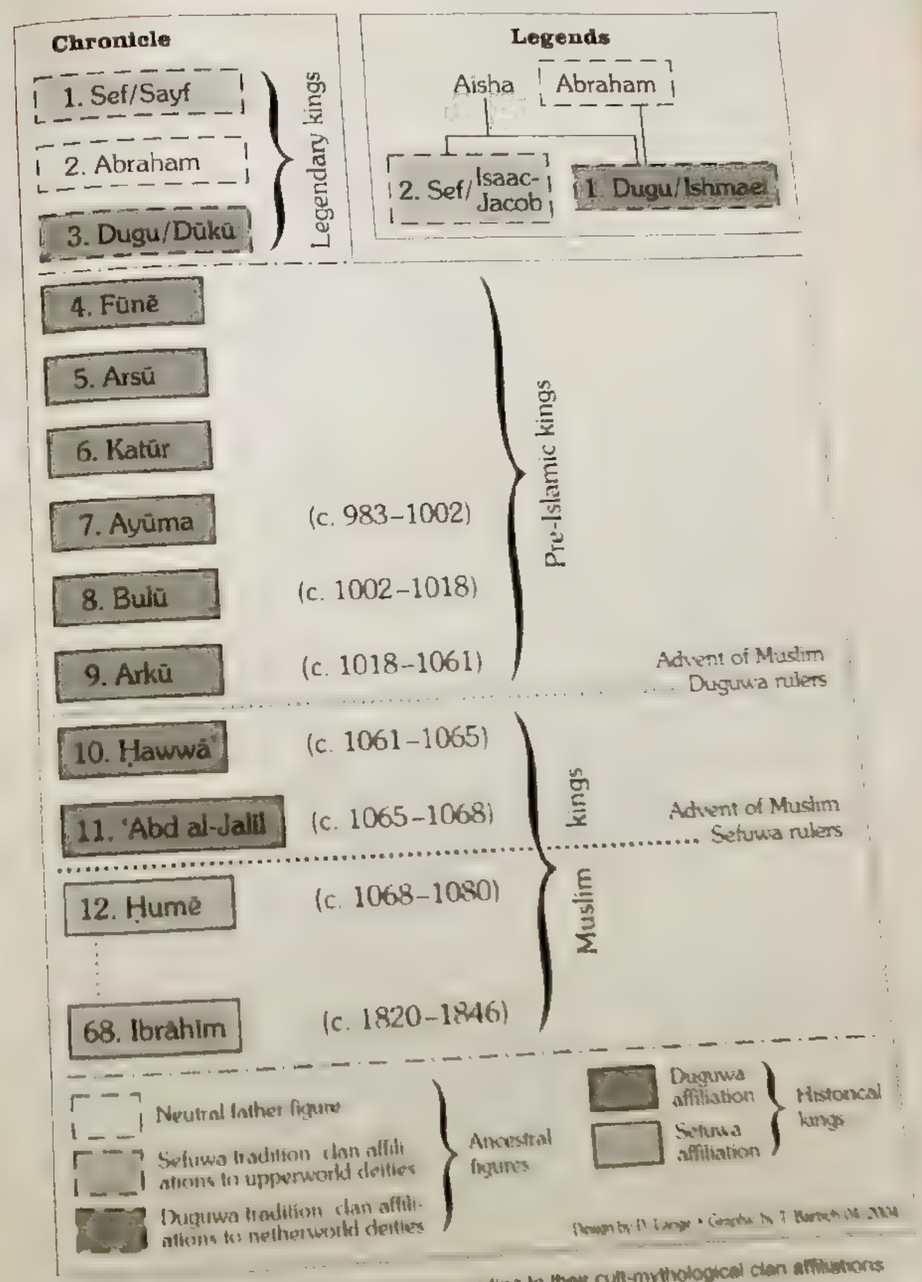


Chart 6 The early kings of Kanem-Bornu according to their cult-mythological clan affiliations

did the party of netherworld deities and hence the Sefuwa eclipsed the Duguwa. It was the incompatibility of the netherworld deities with Islam which seems to have led to the branding of the Duguwa as pagans – just as with the Aznā among the Hausa – although in fact they did convert to Islam.[122] It also explains why the Duguwa rulers were overthrown by the Sefuwa despite their conversion to Islam. Nevertheless, contrary to the Aznā of Hausaland, the Duguwa continued to play important political roles in the fourteenth and in the first half of the fifteenth century. Some of them, in particular the Bulala, having organized a movement for the restoration of divine kingship under the cover of nominal Islam, expelled the Sefuwa from Kanem and confined them to Bornu, the western province of their ancient kingdom. Others, integrated into the state of the Sefuwa, were able to rule for short periods as kings.[123] By that time, Islam had largely eliminated the earlier polytheistic implications of clanship.

With respect to the "seven *Hausā*" states properly speaking, we may turn our attention to the history of Kano blessed by the copious *Kano Chronicle*. The Chronicle presents the picture of an indigenous chiefdom ruled in the beginning by a priest-chief whose main religious activities consisted of the worship of a deity called Tsunburbura and the celebration of a pre-Islamic festivity corresponding most likely to the New Year festival.[124] The period of the early chieftaincy was brought to an end by a great conquest accomplished in the name of a man called Bagauda. A number of elements from the Chronicle show that the Bagauda people coming via Barka (Cyrenaika) in North Africa appear to have been deeply imbued with Israelite culture. Bagauda himself bore the second name Dāwūd aligning him with King David of Israel. Being specifically labelled a Muslim, which in Koranic terms means he was an Israelite monotheist, he himself did not reach Kano. He built the city of Tālūtāwā recalling the name Saul (Tālūt) and he stayed at Shēmē, perhaps al-Shām "Syria".[125] Still today, the blacksmiths of Kano claim descent from King David of Israel.[126] The Bayajidda legend refers to the ancestral importance of Kano by claiming that the Abagayawa blacksmiths of

[122] Lange, *Diwān*, 67-68. For the Dugu caste of Kanem see Comte, *Marriage patterns*, 95, 98, 103. Among the Tubu the Dugu correspond to the blacksmith caste of Azza or Duusdi (Nachtigal, *Sahara*, II, 259; Kronenberg, *Teda*, 87-89). The latter two names might indicate an ancient cult-mythological substratum connecting the Dugu and Azza castes with the Aznā of Hausaland and Oduduwa of Yorubaland.

[123] Lange, "Hausa-Traditionen", 51-52; *id.*, "Ethnogenesis", 268-272.

[124] *Kano Chronicle* transl. Palmer, *Memoirs*, III, 97-101; Arabic text, Jos Museum, Ms 46.

[125] Lange, „Dimension", 193-194. See also Last, " Metaphors", 166-167.

[126] Jaggar, "Kano city blacksmiths", 14 n. 5.

Kano provided the dragon-killer of Daura with a knife.[127] Among the successors of Bagauda/David, we recognise five biblical figures: *Wārithi*, the "heir" (Solomon),[128] Nawata and Gāwata (Gog and Magog), Gijin-Māsu (Moses) and Yūsā (Joshua). All these elements are usually considered to be feedbacks.[129] But if they were recent loans from Arabic literature, one would expect more straightforward parallels.[130] It seems more likely that the early people of Kano looked at their city as being a second Canaanite Jerusalem which was successively conquered by incoming Israelites under the leadership of Moses, Joshua and David. Furthermore, it is significant that in cult-mythological terms the period of "pre-Islamic" chieftaincy is related to the deity Tsunburbura and hence apparently to the Bori snake spirit Danko ɗan Musa,[131] while the kingship of the Bagauda era corresponds to the time of the Yahwistic leaders of Israel. This could mean that in terms of the *Kano Chronicle* a preliminary period of snake or Yamm worship was followed by a long period of Baal/Yahweh worship. Looking at the Bori pantheon of Kano, we find a parallel situation with Danko ɗan Musa and his acolytes at lower levels of importance, and Sarkin Aljann Sulemanu "Solomon, the king of the spirits" and his house at the top.[132] Hence the *Kano Chronicle* and the Bori pantheon of Kano both confirm the validity of the Bayajidda legend, which classifies Kano among the seven Hausā linked to Magajiya/Sarah.

Kano	Israel
1. Bagauda/Dāwūd	David
2. Wārithī "*heir*"	Solomon
3. Gijin-Māsu	Moses
4. Nawata *and* Gāwata	Gog *and* Magog
5. Yūsā	Joshua

Chart 7 Legendary kings of Kano

[127] Smith, *Daura*, 54. The same incident is reported in the oral version of the Bayajidda legend by Malam Alasan (see below pp. 289-296).

[128] The name is based on the Arabic noun *warith* "heir", corresponding to the Ugaritic *yrṯ* and the Hebrew *yarēš* (HAL, II, 423).

[129] Last, "Early Kano", 16; *id.*, "Metaphors", 166-167.

[130] The Koran presents Yājūj and Mājūj as evil-doers (18: 94). It does not mention Joshua by name but refers to him as "the servant of Moses" (18: 61). In the Arabic chronicles, the name Joshua is written Yūshu . The chronological order should have been: Gog and Magog, Moses, Joshua, David.

[131] For this identification see Paden, *Religion*, 45.

[132] Besmer, *Horses*, 65-69, 87-89, 167, 170.

the Queen of Daura, and not among the seven Banzā states linked to Bagwariya/Hagar, the maidservant.

Another state of the "seven Hausā" with Canaanite-Israelite antecedents is Katsina. Here we note that five kings of the Durbawa royal clan of the Aznā clan-family ruled before the rise to power of the Korau royal clan of the Hausā clan-family. Sanau, the last Durbi, was overthrown by Korau in a wrestling match, the details of which are still vividly remembered in Katsina. It is often assumed that the substitution of Korau and his people for the Durbawa took place in the form of a dynastic change. But this view is contradicted by the integration of the Durbi into the fabric of the new state as one of the senior title-holders: up to the present he is chief priest of the Aznā clan-family, and their supreme judge, and he belongs to the council of the four royal electors.[133] Likewise, the circumstances of the fight between Korau and Sanau were so peculiar that a military takeover must be excluded from consideration. Korau was a former playmate of Sanau and he knew that Sanau was unequalled at wrestling owing to a certain charm that he wore around his waist. Korau was invited to a certain feast by Sanau and, having persuaded Sanau's wife to steal his charm, he challenged him to a wrestling bout. The contest took place at the traditional site in front of the palace where the king still today receives the homages of his people during the annual festivals. Robbed of his hidden strength, Sanau was quickly thrown and while he was on the ground Korau treacherously stabbed him to death. It is on this event that the main praise-saying for the king of Katsina – "successor of Korau, wizard of Samri, guest of Sanau who killed his host" – is based.[134]

The legend of Korau's victory over Sanau seeks to explain the rise to power of the Hausā and the demise of the Aznā. But does it refer to an historical event? A number of strange coincidences would rather seem to imply a cult-mythological background: the fight took place at a festival; it was a somewhat sportive or ritual wrestling fight, not a military confrontation between two enemies; and its protagonists, Sanau and Korau, were supposed to have been closely related. Until recently a similar ritual combat was performed between Sarkin Annā and the king of Gobir the day before the Islamic feast of sacrifice (*'id al-adhā*), during which the two officials pretended to engage in a short combat with the type of sharp bracelets (*baurà*) normally used for wrestling fights (*kwàràyà* or *shanci*).[135] In the Gobir case, there is a clear parallel between the traditional ritual combat and the

[133] Nicolas, *Dynamique*, 56, 142, 149, 204; Palmer, "Katsina Emirate", *in:* Temple/Temple, *Notes*, 472.

[134] Hogben/Kirk-Greene, *Emirates*, 156-157; Usman, *Transformation*, 12-16.

[135] Nicolas, *Dynamique*, 349; id., *Question du Gobir*, 13; Abraham, *Dictionary*, 90, 590, 800.

Daura legend, as Karbagari is said to have himself used the sharp bracelets during a wrestling fight, and the protagonists were seen to perform the ritual combat as representatives of the two leading legendary figures, Karbagari and Bawo.[136] Hence it would appear that the Katsina tradition corresponds to a cult legend trying to explain the shift from Aznā to Hausā power in reference to an ancient ritual combat between the two leaders of the two antagonistic clan-families.

The ritual context of the Sanau-Korau fight does not, strictly speaking, exclude the possibility of an historical event. A further look at the Katsina king lists shows that Sanau and Korau were either preceded or succeeded by two figures having biblical connotations: the first being Yanka Dari (Hausa: "hundred sacrifices") also called Ibrāhim and the second Jida Yaki ("many wars"?) corresponding perhaps to Ishmael on account of his position behind Ibrāhīm and his warlike dispositions.[137] Certain traditions even merge the names Jida Yaki and Sanau by calling the figure Jabdayaki, nicknamed Sanau, or just Jabdayaki Sanau.[138] It would therefore appear that Sanau was identical with Ishmael, and Korau with Isaac, Abraham (Yanka Dari) being the father of both.

Again, the appearance of biblical figures in the Katsina king list does not necessarily imply that the Sanau-Korau fight was purely legendary. Indeed, it should be noted that until about the thirteenth century the Durbawa were established in Durbi-ta-Kusheyi, 30 km to the east of Katsina, while Korau and his people were variously located to the north, west and south of Katsina at Birnin Samri, Bugaji and Yandoto. At first the future town of Katsina might therefore have been nothing more than the meeting place of the two antagonistic clan-families during the annual festivals. In that case we would have to reckon with two separate movements of immigration, the co-ordination of which was a local achievement of the medieval period. Such a conclusion, strange as it may appear, is supported to a certain extent by the Bayajidda legend according to which Magajiya and her people came to Daura a long time before the arrival of Bayajidda. Since Bawo was the son of the queen and Karbagari the son of the slave-maid, who is sometimes said to have come with Bayajidda from Bornu,[139] the opposition between Bawo/Isaac-Jacob and Karbagari/Ishmael in the case of the legend corresponds largely

[136] Cf. Nicolas, *Question du Gobir*, 13.

[137] Palmer's combination of three Katsina king lists has the order Sanau, Korau, Yanka Dari/Ibrahim, Jida Yaki. According to an additional note some lists place Yanka Dari and Jida Yaki before Korau and omit Sanau ("History of Katsina", 221 n. 3). Jida Yaki is said to have been continually at war against Gobir (Palmer, "History of Katsina", 221). His name might be composed of Arabic *jiddan* "much" and Hausa *yaki* "war". For Ishmael as warrior see Gen 16: 12.

[138] Landeroin, "Du Tchad", 456; Usman, *Transformation*, 11, 15, 17.

[139] According to the Palmer version, the concubine from Bornu was pregnant before she arrived with the hero in Daura (*Memoirs*, III, 133).

to the different migrations of the Magajiya people and the Bayajidda group. In terms of the two sections of the society, this means that the Hausā party arrived first in Daura and the Banzā party last. In Daura we face therefore the opposite situation to Katsina where the Banzā party was discarded from power by the Hausā party. Whatever the history behind the Bayajidda legend and the Katsina king list might be, in both cases we have to suspect that local factors modified considerably the contributions from the Canaanite-Israelite world.

In the two Banzā states where Hausa is spoken, Kebbi and Zamfara, the available interdependent king lists bear witness to ancient Near Eastern antecedents devoid of any Israelite connections. Indeed, a number of early names provided by these documents can by identified as royal or legendary figures of Mesopotamia.[140] A few isolated names seem to refer to Sumerian and Babylonian history. More significant are the names of five Kassite kings, a dynasty which ruled over Babylon from 1531 to 1155 BC. The fact that Burnaburiaš, who was the first Kassite ruler of Babylon, is also the first king of the king list of Kebbi deserves special attention.[141] There were two rulers called by this name in Kassite Babylon and the king list of Kebbi accordingly twice mentions the name Burumburum. Five other names apparently derive from the Assyrian king list. Most significant is the name Dundun-Fāni which figures in both the Kebbi and the Zamfara list. In the form of a scribal error, it contracts the names of two legendary figures following each other, Didānu (10) and Ḫanū (9). Similarly the Zamfara list has Tasgarin-Burum whereas in the Kebbi list we find Tasgari (23) followed by Burumburum II (24). In fact, Tasgari could either correspond to a distinct ruler, namely Tazzigurumaš, or else relate indeed to Burnaburiaš I since *tizkar* in Akkadian means "be mindful". In the second case, the name of the second Burnaburiaš might have been preceded by a prefix indicating the intention to preserve the memory of the first.[142] In a later section, the Kebbi king list mentions twice the important name Kanta, first as Maru-Kanta (33) after Maru-Tāmū (32) and then as Kanta (43) after Makata (42).[143] Kanta was the great hero of the Kebbi oral legend whose exploits correspond to those of the legendary Sargon of Akkad

[140] For the Kebbi lists see Mischlich/Lippert, "Beiträge", 196-198, and Sölken, "Geschichte von Kabi", 138-143; for the Zamfara lists see Krieger, *Geschichte*, and *id.*, "Bemerkungen", 89-139.

[141] For the ancient Near Eastern king lists see Meissner, *Babylonien*, II, 439-452, and Grayson, "Königslisten und Chroniken", RLA, VI, 86-135.

[142] For an equivalent name in the Sumerian king list see Jacobsen, *King List*, 82-83.

[143] In Akkadian, *mâru* in connection with personal names may either indicate descent from somebody or relation to a deity (CAD, X, 308-316).

Sumer and Babylon	**Kebbi**	**Zamfara**
Dumuzi/Tammūz	15. Tāmū	20. Tāsau
Gilgameš		3. Gīmshiki
Hammurabi (1792–1750 BC)	19. Hamar-Kurma	23. Hamitu-Kurmā
Muršili I (Hittite conqueror of Babylon ca. 1595 BC)	25. Mawāshī	12. Mawāshī

Kassite dynasty (rulers from ca. 1650–1233 BC)	**Kebbi**	**Zamfara**
6. Tazzigurumaš	23. Tasgari	11. Tasgarin-Burum
10. Burnaburiaš I	1. Burumburum I	15. Burumburum
16. Kadašman-Harbe	9. Kadandan	8. Kudandan
19. Burnaburiaš II	24. Burumburum II	11. Tasgarin-Burum
26. Kudur-Enlil	14. Kututuru	

Assyria (rulers from ca. 2000–1244 BC)	**Kebbi**	**Zamfara**
2. Adamu	22. Atamana	28. Atmān
9. Didānu 10. Ḫanū	6. Dundun-Fāni	14. Daudū-Fānu
15. Azarah	4. Zartai	18. Zartai
77. Šalmanassar I	18. Sulaimāna	25. Sulaimana

Chart 8: Legendary kings of Kebbi and Zamfara

(2334-2279 BC).[144] It would therefore appear that the author of the list wanted to present him, like Gimshiki/Gilgameš of the Sumerian list, as a son and successor of Tāmū/Tammūz.

How can one explain this strange combination of ancient Near Eastern names? Most likely, the documentary references to Mesopotamian dynasties – probably first transmitted in Phoenician – were used as a device to bolster the Banzā identity of Kebbi and Zamfara in contra-distinction to the Israelite identity of the Hausā states. Whereas the kings of the Hausā states took pride in their descent from a Canaanite queen, the kings of the Banzā states – instead of linking themselves to a maidservant – traced their origins to powerful Mesopotamian dynasties. A similar anti-Israelite tendency can be observed in the widespread veneration of the first Assyrian conqueror of Israel called in West Africa by his priestly title Shango.

In the Central Sudan, the most outspoken claims of Israelite descent were made by the kings of Kanem-Bornu. In this case we even find a fully articulated genealogical link to Ishmael and Abraham and further to the biblical patriarchs. The somewhat atypical affiliation to the patriarchs through Ishmael can be explained by the early primacy of the Duguwa and their supposed veneration of deities of the netherworld. This filiation was maintained in the Islamic period by identifying the clan deity Sef with the legendary South Arabian hero Sayf b. Dhī Yazan. Contrary to Dugu, Sef represented, like Obatala, a leading deity of the upperworld and as such he belonged to the Isaak-Jacob side of Abraham's descendance.

6. Ishmael and Isaac in Somalia

Further evidence for a deep rooted cleavage between two sections of Canaanite-Israelite society comes from Eastern Africa. In Somalia the two great northern clan-families, the Daarood Ismaʿīil and the Isaaq, bear the patriarchal names of the dualistic Canaanite society. Details of traditions and clan structures show that this naming is not accidental. In the neighbourhood of the Somalis, the Ethiopian tradition of origin offers valuable data indicating an intriguing combination of Israelite and Canaanite cultural elements. Deriving the royal ancestors from a union between the local Queen of Sheba and King Solomon, the tradition suggests that the biblical account of the meeting between the two royal figures

[144] Most likely the Sargon legend was originally a folk tale (Lewis, *Sargon Legend*, 87-124; 262-263). For the Kanta legend see Harris, *Provincial Gazetteer*, 235-235, and for a comparison between the two legends see Lange, "Links", 351-355.

is based on an ancient legend that grew out of the practice of a sacred marriage between the king and the major priestess during the New Year festival.[145]

The Daarood and Isaaq legends indicate an Arabian origin for the two clan ancestors. While some accounts refer to a common arrival of the ancestors, others suggest that Daarood came first and Isaaq several generations later. There are several versions explaining the flight of Daarood to Africa. According to the most elaborate, Daarood's uncle, who was a Sultan, once arranged a great feast to which the boy was invited. The boy refused to eat from the meat because he felt that the sheep from which the meat came had a sense of human flesh about it. When questioned, the women of the palace explained that indeed the female shepherd who herded the flocks had herself suckled the slaughtered lamb. The Sultan became alarmed at young Daarood's power of vision and feared that his throne might be taken away from him by the boy. Therefore the boy's father and his brothers arranged for his flight to Africa. Left alone in the wilderness, Daarood dug a well and excavated a cave for himself. When he had eaten the last sheep of the herd which had been given to him by his father, he became afraid he would die of hunger. But he realized that God was with him when the next morning the bones of the sheep were covered with flesh again. This miracle repeated itself over a certain period. One day he met Donbiro, the daughter of Dir, with her flocks and helped her to water her animals at his well. From then on the two met regularly but secretly. Being well-watered and grazed, the animals of her flock soon became fleshy and fat. When Daarood one day saw that Donbiro was followed by two strong men, he became afraid and climbed a huge tree. One of the men was Dir, the father of Donbiro, and the other was Hawiye. They asked Daarood to help them to remove the lid of the well, but he refused. When Daarood understood who the men were, he made it clear to them that he would only assist them if he was allowed to marry the girl. Further, he asked to use their shoulders when descending from the tree. Hawiye refused, but Dir accepted on the condition that a child of the marriage should be given to their family as a dowry. However, the payment of the dowry was delayed and the first four boys – Kablallah, Sede, Tanade and Ilse – stayed with their parents. It is only the last boy Yuusuf, later nicknamed Awrtable, who was handed over to his mother's kin. He grew up with the Dir and became familiar with them. However, one day he overheard that they were plotting against his own people in order to kill them before they became too numerous. Yuusuf secretly manoeuvred against the plan by attaching the camels of the Dir using a special knot (hence Awrtable: "trick-

[145] 1 Ki 10: 1-13; Mt 12: 42; Lk 11: 31; Kor., 27: 17-44. For an attempt to relate the Ethiopian tradition of origin and the biblical Queen of Sheba story to the Canaanite New Year festival and the ritual of sacred marriage see Lange, "Äthiopien", 269-277.

(2334-2279 BC).[144] It would therefore appear that the author of the list wanted to present him, like Gimshiki/Gilgameš of the Sumerian list, as a son and successor of Tāmū/Tammūz.

How can one explain this strange combination of ancient Near Eastern names? Most likely, the documentary references to Mesopotamian dynasties – probably first transmitted in Phoenician – were used as a device to bolster the Banzā identity of Kebbi and Zamfara in contra-distinction to the Israelite identity of the Hausā states. Whereas the kings of the Hausā states took pride in their descent from a Canaanite queen, the kings of the Banzā states – instead of linking themselves to a maidservant – traced their origins to powerful Mesopotamian dynasties. A similar anti-Israelite tendency can be observed in the widespread veneration of the first Assyrian conqueror of Israel called in West Africa by his priestly title Shango.

In the Central Sudan, the most outspoken claims of Israelite descent were made by the kings of Kanem-Bornu. In this case we even find a fully articulated genealogical link to Ishmael and Abraham and further to the biblical patriarchs. The somewhat atypical affiliation to the patriarchs through Ishmael can be explained by the early primacy of the Duguwa and their supposed veneration of deities of the netherworld. This filiation was maintained in the Islamic period by identifying the clan deity Sef with the legendary South Arabian hero Sayf b. Dhī Yazan. Contrary to Dugu, Sef represented, like Obatala, a leading deity of the upperworld and as such he belonged to the Isaak-Jacob side of Abraham's descendance.

6. Ishmael and Isaac in Somalia

Further evidence for a deep rooted cleavage between two sections of Canaanite-Israelite society comes from Eastern Africa. In Somalia the two great northern clan-families, the Daarood Ismaa'iil and the Isaaq, bear the patriarchal names of the dualistic Canaanite society. Details of traditions and clan structures show that this naming is not accidental. In the neighbourhood of the Somalis, the Ethiopian tradition of origin offers valuable data indicating an intriguing combination of Israelite and Canaanite cultural elements. Deriving the royal ancestors from a union between the local Queen of Sheba and King Solomon, the tradition suggests that the biblical account of the meeting between the two royal figures

[144] Most likely the Sargon legend was originally a folk tale (Lewis, *Sargon Legend*, 87-124; 262-263). For the Kanta legend see Harris, *Provincial Gazetteer*, 235-235, and for a comparison between the two legends see Lange, "Links", 351-355.

is based on an ancient legend that grew out of the practice of a sacred marriage between the king and the major priestess during the New Year festival.[145]

The Daarood and Isaaq legends indicate an Arabian origin for the two clan ancestors. While some accounts refer to a common arrival of the ancestors, others suggest that Daarood came first and Isaaq several generations later. There are several versions explaining the flight of Daarood to Africa. According to the most elaborate, Daarood's uncle, who was a Sultan, once arranged a great feast to which the boy was invited. The boy refused to eat from the meat because he felt that the sheep from which the meat came had a sense of human flesh about it. When questioned, the women of the palace explained that indeed the female shepherd who herded the flocks had herself suckled the slaughtered lamb. The Sultan became alarmed at young Daarood's power of vision and feared that his throne might be taken away from him by the boy. Therefore the boy's father and his brothers arranged for his flight to Africa. Left alone in the wilderness, Daarood dug a well and excavated a cave for himself. When he had eaten the last sheep of the herd which had been given to him by his father, he became afraid he would die of hunger. But he realized that God was with him when the next morning the bones of the sheep were covered with flesh again. This miracle repeated itself over a certain period. One day he met Donbiro, the daughter of Dir, with her flocks and helped her to water her animals at his well. From then on the two met regularly but secretly. Being well-watered and grazed, the animals of her flock soon became fleshy and fat. When Daarood one day saw that Donbiro was followed by two strong men, he became afraid and climbed a huge tree. One of the men was Dir, the father of Donbiro, and the other was Hawiye. They asked Daarood to help them to remove the lid of the well, but he refused. When Daarood understood who the men were, he made it clear to them that he would only assist them if he was allowed to marry the girl. Further, he asked to use their shoulders when descending from the tree. Hawiye refused, but Dir accepted on the condition that a child of the marriage should be given to their family as a dowry. However, the payment of the dowry was delayed and the first four boys – Kablallah, Sede, Tanade and Iise – stayed with their parents. It is only the last boy Yuusuf, later nicknamed Awrtable, who was handed over to his mother's kin. He grew up with the Dir and became familiar with them. However, one day he overheard that they were plotting against his own people in order to kill them before they became too numerous. Yuusuf secretly manoeuvred against the plan by attaching the camels of the Dir using a special knot (hence Awrtable: "trick-

[145] 1 Ki 10: 1-13; Mt 12: 42; Lk 11: 31; Kon. 37: 17-44. For an attempt to relate the Ethiopian tradition of origin and the biblical Queen of Sheba story to the Canaanite New Year festival and the ritual of sacred marriage see Lange, "Äthiopien", 269-277.

ing with camel"), alerting his brothers, and later on joining them. Therefore the plot failed. Eventually Daarood became very old and was about to die. He was with his sons some distance from their encampment. Seeing their father in such physical difficulties, each of the boys forwarded his own solution to the problem: Kablallah wanted to have his father stay where he was, while Yuusuf suggested that he might be taken home on a horse. According to the different proposals, the father blessed his sons: the eldest, Kablallah, was promised numerous offspring and the youngest, Yuusuf, would have only few descendants but these would excel in learning and rank.[146]

There are a number of elements in the Daarood legend which are reminiscent of Biblical and Koranic stories. First, it should be noted that the name Ismaa'iil or Ismaa'iil Jabarti, appears to refer to the biblical Ishmael, the ancestor of the Arabs. In line with this, the strange story of the meat of a sheep which has something of human flesh about it can be interpreted as a pale reflex of the biblical story of Isaac's or, according to most Islamic authorities, Ishmael's intended sacrifice and his substitution with a ram. The regenerating meat of a sheep is perhaps likewise building on the sacrifice story, containing in addition a reference to fertility. Similar to Hagar, Daarood's people provided him with food to survive in the wilderness (Gen 21: 14). The beneficial well dug by Daarood himself which brought about the wonderful fattening of Donbiro's herd, can be related to various biblical and Islamic allusions to sources and wells, especially the Meccan well of Zamzam, connected with Hagar and Ishmael.[147] Moreover, the well, the cave, and also the bounty which figure so prominently in the Daarood legend evoke various aspects of the netherworld: its entrance, its limitation by a river and its – apparent paradoxical – fertility and creativity.[148]

On the other hand a comparison between the youngest boy Yuusuf with the Biblical and Koranic Joseph or Yūsūf is unavoidable. According to the Bible, Joseph was the second youngest son of Jacob, he was thrown by his brothers into a cistern (*bór*) and then sold by them to Ishmaelites who took him to Egypt (Gen

[146] Drake-Brockman, *Somaliland*, 72-75, 273; Laurence, *Tree*, 134-138; Lewis, *Peoples*, 18-23. Further information on Somali traditions were kindly provided by Mohamed Abdi, Asha and Saida Herzi and Habib Dirie.

[147] Gen 16: 7 (Hagar at a source in the desert); 16: 14 (well called Beer Lahai Roi "well of the Living One who sees me"); 21: 19 (Hagar discovered in the desert a well, enabling her to give water to Ishmael). Islamic traditions connect the well Zamzam in the Ka'ba with Hagar's or Ismā'īl's searching for water (Gaudefroy-Demombynes, *Pèlerinage*, 77-80; Firestone, *Journeys*, 63-71).

[148] I am grateful to Katrin Mitzinger for this idea. For Môt as a god of fertility see Tromp, *Conception*, 53, 62, 217, and as the seed of creation see Philo of Byblos 10, 1-2 (Attridge/Oden, *Philo of Byblos*, 37-39).

37: 24-28). Having reached a high position in Egypt, he later forgave his brothers and helped them to survive a terrible famine. When the father was about to die, he asked Joseph to bring him back to the burial place of his fathers (Gen 47: 30). Then he gave his blessings to Joseph and his two sons and later one after the other to his own twelve sons (Gen 48-49). These different incidents, most of them also found in the Koran, run parallel to the story of Daarood.[149] Yuusuf was given to foreign people (the Dir), he assisted his brothers although he was not living among them, he promised to bring his father home for burial and he received special blessings from him. With respect to the problem of having Yuusuf in Somalia on Ishmael's and not Isaac's side as in the Bible, it should be noted that the biblical story likewise connects Joseph with the Ishmaelites and with the foreign country of Egypt. All in all, it is hardly conceivable that the Ishmael-Joseph story could be remembered solely by oral transmission for over two thousand years if it was not related to a specific social and cult-mythological context. As the tradition of origin of the Awrtable, the Joseph story is among the Somali firmly rooted in a specific clan for which it constitutes the foundation charter.

Turning our attention to Isaaq, the second great ancestor of the Somali, we note that according to legend the patriarch came from Hadramawt and first preached in Mecca, then travelled to Egypt and hence to Eritrea and Zayla' in the northwest of Somalia.[150] From there he moved teaching and preaching to Harar, undertook the pilgrimage to Mecca, came back to Somalia and went along the shore eastward to Mait where he converted the pagan people to Islam. Finally, he thought of getting married. He first took as his wife Magaado, the daughter of Magaad. However, for a long time she did not bear him any child. So Isaaq married the Ethiopian slave girl Hannifa. She bore four sons: Tolja lo, Ja'lo, Sanbuuru and 'Ibraan. Then his first wife in turn gave birth to the twins Arab and Ismaa'iil, the latter nicknamed Garhajis.[151] Legends mention a third wife of the patriarch with respect to descendants living in Arabia. The important Isaaq clans of Habar Awal and Habar Ayuub are traced either to Magaado or to the third wife.[152] It is further noteworthy that the ancestors of the Habar Habuusheed, the

[149] According to the Koran, travellers found Joseph in a cistern (*jubb*) and sold him in Egypt (12: 19-20). There is no mention of Jacob's blessing, nor any allusion to his desire to be buried in Canaan.

[150] Bader, *Yihun*, 105 (R. Burton). Later traditions trace Isaaq to 'Ali b. Abi Tālib (Schlee, *Identities*, 28; Lewis, *Blood*, 103).

[151] Drake-Brockman, *Somaliland*, 76; Laurence, *Tree*, 145-146; Lewis, *Peoples*, 23-24.

[152] The information on the ancestry of the Isaaq clans was kindly provided by Mohamed Abdi. Drake-Brockman, Laurence and Lewis consider the Habar Awal and the Habar Ayuub to be descendants of the third wife (*Somaliland*, 272; *Tree*, 145; *Peoples*, 23-24; *Blood*, 108).

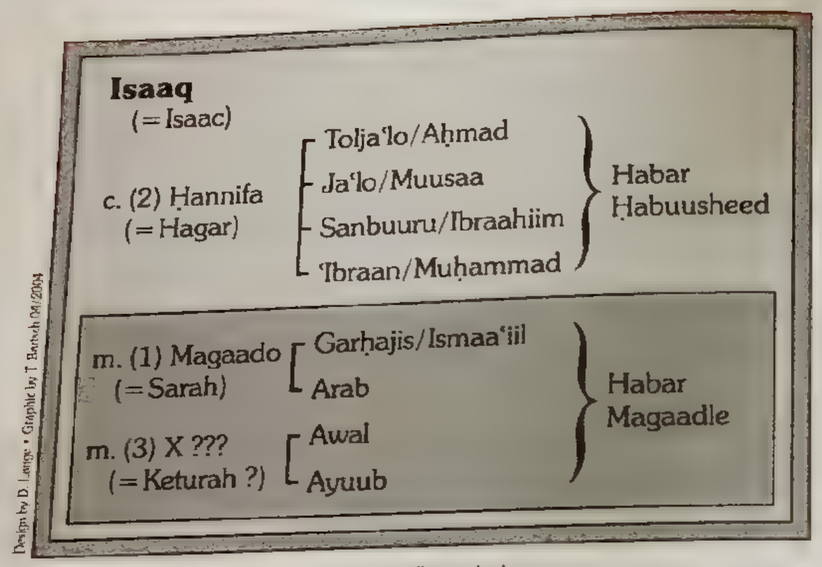


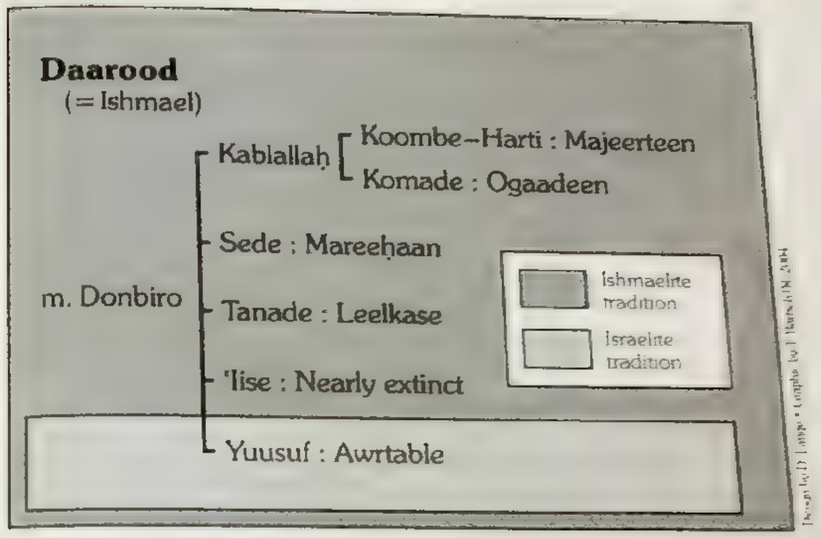
Chart B: The biblical descent pattern in an Ishmaelite context.

four sons of the Ethiopian slave girl, are also known by the Semitic names Ibraan (Eber ?), Ibraahiim, Muusaa and Ahmad.[153]

The Isaaq legend is obviously patterned on the Biblical and Koranic notion of a wandering patriarch who piously fulfills his religious duties. It further builds on the Biblical genealogy of the Israelite and Ishmaelite tribes, with the minor shift in the general ancestry from Abraham to Isaac and the major twist of attributing the offspring of Sarah to Hagar and vice versa. Indeed, among the Isaaq, it is the childless woman Sarah – Magaado, the daughter of Magaad – who later becomes the mother of Ismaa'iil and Arab.[154] But before her it was the Ethiopian slave mother, who, like Hagar, gave birth to sons of the patriarch. In the twins Ismaa'iil and Arab we may recognise the parallel ancestors of the Ishmaelites and the Arabs, while the Semitic names of the numerous descendants of the slave woman would seem to associate these descendants to Eber, Abraham and Moses. Furthermore, the equivalent to Hagar bears the curious name Ḥannifa which probably has to be

[153] Lewis, *Peoples*, 24; Bader, *Yibro*, 105-107, and information by Mohamed Abdi.

[154] There is some confusion over the names of the progenitor and his daughter: Drake-Brockman and Lewis call the father Magadleh and have the daughter unnamed. Laurence calls the father Magad, the daughter Magado and the offspring Magadleh. Bader applies the names Magaado to the daughter and Magaadleh to the father and to the offsping (*Tree*, 145-146; *Yibro*, 107).



the two closely related Somali clan-families of Daarood and Isaaq

understood in the pre-Koranic Hebrew, Syriac and Ethiopian sense of "unbeliever".[155] Hence we find among the Somali a major clan-family which, although it bears an Israelite name, has transmitted the biblical descent pattern in a very odd fashion: while the ancestress corresponding to Sarah is credited with the descent of the Ishmaelites and the Arabs, the equivalent of Hagar becomes the ancestress of the Israelites. Is such a radical distortion of the biblical evidence in favour of the Ishmaelites at all likely to have ever occurred?

In spite of their name, the Isaaq should basically be considered remnants of a Proto-Arab and not Israelite clan-family. As such they were bound to adopt the Ishmaelite point of view with respect to religion and ancestry. In early Christian literature we find traces of a similar attempt to use the biblical pattern of descent for particular group interests. Thus in the first century, Paul claims that the Jews were slaves since they belonged to the descendants of Hagar, while the Christians were free on account of their relation to Sarah (Gal 4: 22-30). Likewise, early Christian scholars from the fourth century onward refer to Arabs by designating them as Saracens. Indeed, several authors derive this name from Sarah and claim that the Ishmaelites used the term in order to avoid the disgrace of descent from a

[155] Cf. Watt, "Hanīf", EI², III, 169-170; Crone/Cook, *Hagarism*, 13-14. The ancestor of the Somali Yibir is similarly called Muhammad Hanīf (Lewis, *Peoples*, 45; Bader, *Yibro*, 79-80).

slave mother.[156] From these remarks we may deduce that pre-Islamic Arabs tended to trace their ancestry from the legal wife of Abraham in order to avoid being treated as descendants of Hagar. This is exactly what we find in the genealogical traditions of the Somalian Isaaq: the Israelites are related to the slave women and the Arabs are turned into descendants of the legal wife of the patriarch.

The Ife clans of Olokun and Osaara exhibit a similar, but less radical, diversion from the biblical descent pattern. By having the name of Sarah, based on the Hebrew royal title *śārā* "princess, queen", shifted from the first to the second wife of the patriarch, by distinguishing between a rich wife with no child and a poor wife with many children, and by suppressing the reference to the slave status of the second wife, the Ife tradition follows the general trend of the Yoruba cultural pattern favouring the deities of the netherworld over the deities of the upperworld.[157] On the legendary level, this tendency corresponds, as in the Somali case, to the upgrading of the Ishmaelites and the downgrading of the – apparent – Israelites.

Both Somali clan ancestors, Daarood Ismaa'iil and Isaaq, are worshipped during pilgrimages to their tombs. These lie in Northern Somalia 70 km from each other, with the tomb of the elder Daarood located further inland and less frequented. The Daarood pilgrims not only visit the tomb of their ancestor but also his cave, in which grease is said to bear testimony up to the present day to the miraculous regeneration of his food. In the same province of Sanaag we find the tombs of the five sons of Daarood and other tombs of unidentified prophets. With respect to the cultic importance of the clan traditions, it may further be noted that traditionally-minded members of the Daarood clan-family resort to an invocation of Ismaa'iil Jabarti in the face of danger. They also pronounce benedictions and wishes of bounty by referring to the "ribs (*sarar*) of Daarood Ismaa'iil", thus specifically recalling the never-ending food supply of their legendary ancestor. The fertility aspect of the legend, the cave tradition, and the benediction are reminiscent of a former mythological context.

Finally, it should be mentioned that the Daarood recognise certain Arabs living in the Saudi Arabian province of 'Asir, in the Yemenite province of Hadramawt, and in northern 'Oman as their kin. Referring to them by their eponymous ancestor, they call them, in line with their own designation Daarood Ismaa'iil, 'Asiir

[156] Mordtmann, "Saracens", EI¹, IV, 156 (Jerome); Millar, "Hagar", 41-45 (Sozomen).

[157] *Cf.* Parratt, "Approach", 342-343; Lange, "Ursprung des Bösen", 9-13. In spite of the fact that Olokun means "goddess of the sea", the clan of Olokun belongs to the Obatala party (Olu/Obatala FN 01, 133; Okunniyi/Olokun FN 02, 62), while the Osaara clan, associated with the small Osaara lagoon of Ife, belongs to the Oramfe party (Fabunmi, *Ife Shrines*, 22; Jimoh/Emese FN 00, 172).

Ismaa'iil, Mahri Ismaa'iil, and Suuri Ismaa'iil.[158] The Daarood do not remember any direct genealogical connections between their ancestors and the Arab clans or clan-families. On the grounds of geographical proximity, it is not surprising that the Daarood claim to be related to the Mahri, but the inclusion of the 'Asiir and the Suuri into the same group of Ishmaelites needs special consideration. There is a particular group of Mahri immigrants called 'Arabta Mahmuud Saaleh whose ancestor is supposed to have arrived in Boosaaso in the eighteenth century. Collectively the members of this lineage are likewise considered Mahri Ismaa'iil.[159] Somali links to the Proto-Arabs are not restricted to the Daarood and the Isaaq. The great majority of Somali-speakers trace their origins back to Samaale,[160] the main national ancestor whose name may be interpreted as a reflection of the name of the ancient Arab confederation of the Sumu'il.[161] Furthermore, some authors believe that remnants of Canaanite-Israelite cults, names and group identities are widespread among the different Somali clans.[162]

7. Abraham and Ishmael in Mecca

In the cult of Mecca we observe the pre-eminent position of Ishmael and the absence of Isaac. The running of the pilgrims between the hills of al-Safā and al-Marwa (*sa'y*) is explained as an actualization of Hagar's desperate search for water to quench the thirst of Ishmael. There are different versions of the story of how Ishmael was saved by the water from the well of Zamzam: either the angel Gabriel made the water flow, or Ishmael himself thrust his foot or finger into the sand and a spring arose. Hagar then rushed forward and hurriedly scooped the moisture into her jug.[163] This association of Hagar and Ishmael with water is fully in line with biblical accounts. Its particular importance for the Meccan cult might reflect a deep Canaanite culture stratum carefully concealed by an Israelite legend.[164]

Once established in Mecca, Ishmael received several visits from his father Abraham and finally he helped him build the Ka'ba (Kor. 2: 121). After the de-

[158] Cf. Lewis, *Blood*, 103; Headley *et al.*, "Asir", EI², I, 729-731; Müller, "Mahra", EI², VI, 729-731. Sur is an ancient harbour in the northeast of Oman.

[159] Cerulli, "Gruppo Mahri", 25-26, and oral information from Mohamed Abdi.

[160] Lewis, *Peoples*, 13-17; id., *Blood*, 105; Schlee, *Identities*, 28.

[161] See below p. 268.

[162] Mohamed Abdi, *Horsure*, 65-129; Bader, *Vibes*, 115-144. On the relation between the Yibir (Hebrews?) and the *Ishaw* monty of the Rendille and the Gabbra see Schlee, *Identities*, 11-12; 241-242. The iron-working Tumaal can be compared with the biblical figure of Tubal or Tubal-Cain (Gen 4: 22; Ez 27: 13).

[163] Wensinck, "Ismā'il", EI², II, 543; Firestone, *Journeys*, 63-71.

[164] Cf. Gaudefroy Demombynes, *Pèlerinage*, 71-101; Daum, *Religion*, 110-111.

parture of his father, Ishmael remained in Mecca and was finally buried with his mother in a special place close to the Ka'ba called Hijr.[165] It is difficult to perceive the original Canaanite cult-mythology behind the Islamic stories derived from biblical sources. The only pre-Islamic deity of the Ka'ba with his own statue was Hubāl. Some authors consider him to have been the original "Lord of this House" mentioned in the Koran (106: 3).[166] On account of a painting of Abraham representing the patriarch as holding the divinatory arrows normally associated with the god, it is sometimes supposed that Abraham was an Islamic cover-name for Hubāl.[167] In spite of this tradition, it is more likely that the god of the Ka'ba was originally associated with the more specific figure of Ishmael.[168] Furthermore, Hubāl's characteristics as a primordial god and specifically his identification as either a moon deity or a deity akin to Saturn, suggest a connection with the netherworld.[169] Although Abraham, on the basis of earlier Israelite influences and biblical loans, is given greater emphasis in the Koran, Ishmael would appear to have been more firmly rooted in the pre-Islamic cult-drama of the Ka'ba.

The cult-dramatic performance of Mecca most important to this analysis is the great pilgrimage (*hājj*) which Muslim authorities unanimously refer back to a set of pre-Islamic ceremonies with minor adaptations. What then were the main features and the original ideas attached to the pre-Islamic *hājj*? The pilgrims first put on a white dress in two pieces without seams and thus entered a state of ritual purity (*ihrām*). They accomplished the most significant performances in the form of a great procession leading like the movement of the sun from Mount 'Arafat in the east to Mina, five kilometres before Mecca in the west. Changing from the moment of *wuqūf* "waiting" to *ifāda* "running", they moved hastily in the evening from 'Arafat towards Mecca. At Muzdalifa they slept on the ground without any comforts. They saw on their right the fire of Kuzah and at day break they rushed in a second *ifāda* towards Mina. Here they lapidated the Great Satan with stones which they had picked up at Muzdalifa. Once they had changed their clothes and left the state of *ihrām*, they individually proceeded to perform the sacrifice in commemoration of Abraham and Isaac or Ishmael.[170]

[165] Wensinck, "Ka'ba", EI¹, II, 585; Firestone, *Journeys*, 70, 86, 89. Crone and Cook connect the Hijr with Hagar (*Hagarism*, 23)

[166] Wellhausen, *Reste*, 75, 221; Winckler, *Arabisch-Semitisch*, 83. Some authors also refer the Koranic expression *al-bayt al-'atiq* 22: 29, 33) to Hubāl (cf. Fahd, *Panthéon*, 102).

[167] Wellhausen, *Reste*, 75; Winckler, *Arabisch-Semitisch*, 110.

[168] Fahd contrasts the universalistic aspects of Allah with the particularism of Hubāl (*Panthéon*, 96).

[169] Winckler, *Arabisch-Semitisch*, 83; Nielsen, "Religion", 226. Cf. Fahd, *Panthéon*, 102-103.

[170] Gaudefroy-Demombynes, *Pèlerinage*, 235-276; Wensinck, "Hādjdj", EI¹, II, 199-201; Daum, *Religion*, 119-124.

According to the most likely explanation, these ancient moments of a pre-Israelite cult-drama corresponded to the re-enactments of the return of the main Meccan god to his temple. On his way back to the town the god had to confront his divine foe, later associated with Satan. In the course of the procession the pilgrims attempted to join their god and identify with him by adopting the same movements: first they waited for him, then they rushed forward with him and finally they won a great victory together with him. The most unpleasant performance took place on the last night when the deity was about to leave the netherworld: then the pilgrims were prepared to suffer at Muzdalifa for the sake of their god the discomfort of a short night in the wilderness. The next morning the pilgrims ran forward to take part in Mina in the decisive combat for the support of their god. By pronouncing continuously in loud voices *labbayka* – "at your service" or "we assist you",[171] they expressed their deep emotional identification with the god's efforts to overcome his enemy. The defeat of the divine foe was re-enacted by the stoning of Satan. Once the victory was achieved, the pilgrims had fulfilled their task and they could quit the state of *ihrām*. From then on the cult-cry *labbayka* gave way to the invocation *Allāhu akbar* "God is greater". With the help of his faithful people, the god had vanquished his enemy and could again return to the Ka'ba. Henceforce he became once more the "greater God", the one who had shown that he was stronger than his foe.[172]

Who were the two opposing deities of this pre-Islamic and pre-Israelite cult-drama? The prominence of Ishmael in the Ka'ba and the former importance of Hubāl suggest that we are dealing here with the combat between the leading god of the netherworld rushing towards his temple, and the leading god of the upperworld trying to obstruct his movements. Such a reconstruction amounts to a shift of the resurrection pattern from the dying and rising god to the primordial deity: the leading god of the netherworld, most likely Hubāl, confronted and fought the thunder-god Kuzah.[173] In the end he vanquished Kuzah by stoning him or his alter ego Satan, the sun-demon.[174] Under the premise of Israelite monotheism and of early Islam, this sequence of ritual performances was reinterpreted in terms of the biblical sacrifice of Isaac. The uncertainty of the Muslim authorities as to

[171] Wensinck, "Talbiya", EI¹, IV, 640; Fahd, "Talbiya", EI², X, 160-161.

[172] Cf. Gaudefroy-Demombynes, *Pèlerinage*, 181-184; Wensinck, "Hādjdj", EI¹, II, 196-201.

[173] A similar inversion of the resurrection pattern in favour of the leading deity of the netherworld can be observed in the case of Amota (= Mòt), the state-god of the Yoruba town of Ila (cf. Pemberton/Afolayan, *Kingship*, 191-196).

[174] Earlier interpreters identified the involved deities in a similar way but neglected the cult-dramatic aspect of the pilgrimage (Wellhausen, *Reste*, 79-84; Wensinck, "Hādjdj", EI¹, II, 199-201;

the identity of the intended victim – Isaac or Ishmael – and their interpretation of the act of stoning as Abraham's refusal to be distracted from his mission,[175] clearly show that we are facing here an adaptation of the biblical legend from the ancient Meccan cult-drama. Nevertheless, the details of the successive rituals are clear enough to allow us to perceive the original polytheistic meaning of the Meccan pilgrimage under the overlay of later explanations. In particular they show that Abraham's sacrifice of his son has to be seen in the context of the antagonism between the two hostile deities which elsewhere in the Canaanite-Israelite world was reinterpreted in terms of conflictual relations between the two sons of Abraham.

8. Characteristics of the Canaanite-Israelite Culture Pattern in Africa

The dualistic social organization associated with the names Isaac and Ishmael, and sometimes Abraham, can be found in West and East Africa. Genealogical concepts, family constellations in stories of origin, and isolated patriarchal names from these areas indicate relationships with Israel. Behind these orally transmitted legends we discern a related cult-mythological background, particularly apparent among the Yoruba and the Hausa, suggesting the existence of a bi-focal society in which cultic and mythological features prevailed over bureaucratic and legendary ones. What then were the overall characteristics of the cultural pattern that blended Israelite genealogical concepts with Canaanite cult-mythology?

Among the Hausa the legendary evidence refers to two sets of states and to two sections of society – those descending from the first-born son of a slave mother and those descending from the next-born son of a royal mother. Among the Yoruba the myth of creation allows us to distinguish likewise between two sections of society – the first being composed of clans claiming descent from the primordial god and his followers and the second from the god of creation and his followers. Only in Kanem-Bornu, where two similar sections of society can be shown to have existed before the rise of Islam, is it possible to relate one of the sections to Ishmael and to recognise Abraham as the supreme father towering above both sections. Various comparisons make it clear that the dualistic society was originally in all three cases based on two groups of clans distinguished by their affiliation to deities of the upper or of the netherworld. However Abraham, the progenitor of the two major clan ancestors, was clearly detached from the clan structure of society. His position corresponded to that of the high god Olodumare among the Yoruba who was too remote to have been involved in any clan ancestry

[175] Wensinck, „Hādjdj", *EI*¹, II, 198; Firestone, *Journeys*, 110-115.

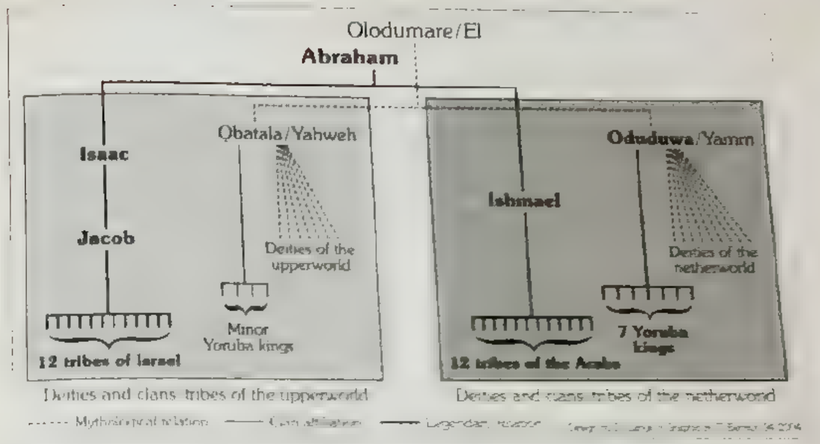


Chart 10 Pre-eminent Canaanite-Israelite deities and Yoruba legendary figures

and hence in any cult-drama.[176] In view of the striking parallels between various Central Sudanic societies it is tempting to suppose that the biblical Isaac-Jacob and Ishmael corresponded, like their African counterparts, to legendary cover figures put forward to conceal the antagonistic deities Baal Yahweh and Yamm, to obliterate their distinct divine circles, and hence to bridge the gap between the oppositional descent groups of Canaanite society.

Turning our attention to East Africa, we find that northern Somali clan structure confirms findings from the Central Sudan. But in this case, three highly significant Israelite names have been preserved in important clan formations: Ishmael, Isaac and Joseph. Furthermore, northern Somali clan structure offers a good example of a dualistic system associated with a sub-system of reciprocal representation. In other words, in all three major societies considered – the Hausa, the Yoruba and the Somali – on the level of the state or the clan-family, each section contains on a subordinate level one or several clans of the opposite section, an arrangement which can be called Canaanite-Israelite. Thus we find among the Ishmaelite Daarood the Israelite clan of Yuusuf and among the Israelite Isaaq – in a disguised form – the Ishmaelites and the Arabs. Similarly, each Hausa kingdom has a Hausā and an Aznā section or clan-family, the former being in a dominant position among the *Hausā bakwāi* and the latter among the *Banza bakwāi*. Among the Yoruba there are the Oduduwa and the Obatala sections, the

[176] Cf. Idowu, *Olodumare*, 48-50; Lange, "Ursprung des Bösen", 9-13.

former predominating in the Oduduwa kingdoms and the latter in the Obatala kingdoms.[177]

But above all, the Somali cultural pattern exhibits the most significant features of the Ishmaelite tradition: here an Israelite minority group – the Joseph people – lives in an Ishmaelite context. With respect to the biblical descent pattern, we discern among the Isaaq Somali an affiliation of the indigenous majority group to Sarah and of the foreign minority group to Hagar. It is likely that this genealogical concept of descent through Sarah was more widespread among the ancient Arabs than the notion of a Hagarene descent derived from the Torah.[178] Islamic authors relying on oral sources tend to upgrade the status of Hagar and Ishmael, sometimes even turning Hagar into a princess.[179] Moreover, they most often consider Ishmael as the intended object of the sacrifice of Abraham rather than Isaac.[180] The tendency to give precedence to the Ishmaelites over the Israelites, occasionally called Hagarism, is thought to have prevailed among pre-Islamic Arabs.[181] But in fact other evidence, in line with the genealogical pattern of the Isaaq Somali, points to the earlier prevalence of genealogical links to the legal wife of Abraham.[182] The absence of any recollections among the Isaac clans of the Somali concerning the historical Israelites, the Jews, and any form of Jewish religion can be explained by the early implantation of their ancestral clans into a purely Ishmaelite context.

With respect to Israel, similar indications of a prevailing dualistic system exist involving the reciprocal representation in a subservient position. We get a glimpse of this in the tribal lists, in which twelve tribes are mentioned either with Levi and then also with Joseph, or without Levi and then with the subtribes of Ephraim and Manasseh in place of Joseph.[183] Various answers have been given to explain this discrepancy.[184] In the context of the debate it should first be noted that two curses concerning Simeon and Levi are included in the blessings of Jacob

[177] For instance in the Oduduwa kingdom of Ife, Oduduwa is dominant and Obatala is secondary (Lange, "Preservation", 141-143), while in the Obatala kingdom of Ifon Obatala is dominant and Ogun secondary (Oriṣatoyinbo/Adediran, *History*, 63).

[178] Ibn Isḥāq, *Sīrat*, I, ed. M. Saqā *et al.* Cairo s.d., 5-6; Ya'qūbī, *Ta'rikh*, I, ed. M. Th. Houtsma, Leiden 1883, 25; Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, I, Leiden 1879, 268-270.

[179] Kisā'ī, *Ktsas*, 142; transl. Thackston, *Tales*, 151. According to Tha'labī, Abraham treated Ishmael more honorably than Isaac (*'Ara'is*, Cairo 1994, 81-82).

[180] Wensinck, "Ismā'īl", EI[1], II, 544; Paret, "Ismā'īl", EI[2], III, 192; Firestone, *Journeys*, 135-151; 170-178.

[181] Crone/Cook, *Hagarism*, 3-34; Knauf, *Ismael*, 49-55.

[182] See the above mentioned etymologies of the names Saracens and Ossara on p. 236.

[183] Gen 29: 31-35; 30: 1-24; 35: 16 (with Levi); Num 26: 5-48 (without Levi).

[184] Noth, *Geschichte*, 83-84; Donner, *Geschichte*, 72-73.

(Gen 49: 1-27),[185] while Joseph and his sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, are blessed separately (Gen 48: 14-20). It should be recognised further that Joseph is said to have been bought by Ishmaelites and sold by them in Egypt where he later reached a very high position (Gen 37-50). The somewhat separate and ostracised situation of the Levites among the tribes of Israel may best be explained by the former cultic role of their ancestors as priests of the netherworld deity Yamm, Dôd or Wadd. As such the Levites were in a subordinate position within a system in which priority was given to the priests (*kōhanim*) of the god of creation.[186] Inversely, the descendants of Joseph, tightly connected with the Ishmaelites and Egypt, might have been in a corresponding position of subordination among the former worshippers of deities of the netherworld, who then under the monotheistic influence of Israel turned into descendants of Ishmael. This is the situation of the Awrtable among the Somali.

9. The Spread of the Canaanite-Israelite Culture Pattern to East Africa

Turning to East Africa, we note that the Horn of Africa stands in geographical proximity to Arabia. Towards the middle of the first millenium BC, the northern Ethiopian highlands (now Eritrea) experienced strong Sabean influences. The Sabean kingdom of Di amat flourished from at least 420 to 320 BC, but the South Arabian interference in Northeast Africa may have started much earlier.[187] Immigrants from South Arabia imported a Semitic language into Africa, derivations of which are still spoken in Eritrea, the highlands of Ethiopia, and parts of eastern Ethiopia.[188] The Israelite Falasha who still live in central Ethiopia bear testimony to the religious dimension of the South Arabian immigration.[189] At one stage, perhaps during the Achaemenid period or later, Semitic colonists brought with them – in connection with the concept of sacred marriage – the Israelite legend of the Queen of Sheba. At first concealed within the polytheistic surface of the South Arabian religion, these traditions became official only as a consequence of

[185] Dozy suggests that the Simeonites whom he considers to be related to the Ishmaelites founded the Ka'ba of Mecca (*Israeliten*, 74-86, 89).

[186] Lange, "Ursprung des Bösen", 13-26. In the oasis of Dedan, Levites are mentioned in connection with Wadd (Grimme, "Levitismus", 171).

[187] Kitchen, *Documentation*, 115-117, 227, 247. Von Wissmann considers Di amat to have been a Sabean state colony (*Geschichte*, 261-265).

[188] Tigrinya, Amharic, Gurage and Harari (Ullendorff, *Ethiopians*, 111-130). Munro-Hay dates the beginning of the spread of the Semitic languages in Ethiopia to 2000 BC (*Aksum*, 62).

[189] Rathjens, *Juden*, 9-13; Ullendorff, *Ethiopians*, 106-107.

the Christianisation of Axum in the first half of the fourth century AD.[190] From the third to the sixth century AD, the kingdom of Axum was strong enough to intermittently bring its influence to bear on its neighbours on the other side of the Red Sea.[191]

A similar movement starting further east on the northern coast of the Gulf of Aden must have reached Somalia. In this case the evidence is provided by biblical clan names embedded in an Ishmaelite context. Assyrian records of the eighth and seventh century BC mention a northern Arab confederation called Šumu'il.[192] Various books of the Old Testament refer to members of this confederation, led by the clan of Kedar, as Ishmaelites.[193] During the period of Persian administration in the sixth and fifth century BC, the different clans of the confederation of Šumu'il lost their political unity – but not necessarily their group identity.[194] The main deity of Šumu'il was 'Aṯtaršamain, usually associated with Venus, and next to her there was Ruḍā, the moon-deity.[195] Nuhā, the sun-deity, completed the divine triad of the confederation.[196] In view of the pre-eminence of two nocturnal gods, we are apparently dealing here with a situation of predominant netherworld deities. The presence of the sun-deity in a subordinate position may in turn indicate the integration of adepts of the upperworld deities, and in particular worshippers of the dying and rising god, into the context of prevalent netherworld deities. Probably derived from Šumu'il, the name Ishmael was subsequently used by carriers of monotheistic ideas to refer to the moon-god existing as a clan deity in similar constellations elsewhere in the Semitic world.

Triads composed of the moon, the Venus and the sun-deity are also found in the South Arabian kingdoms of Ma'īn, Qatabān and Hadramawt which flourished from the ninth to the fourth century BC under the suzerainty of Saba'.[197] In

[190] Cf. Ullendorff, "Queen of Sheba", 107-108; Phillipson, *Ethiopia*, 141-142; Lange, "Äthiopien", 274-277.

[191] Munro-Haye, *Aksum*, 71-88; Phillipson, *Ethiopia*, 51-54.

[192] Eph'al, *Ancient Arabs*, 229-230; Knauf, *Ismael*, 1-9.

[193] Ps. 83: 7-8 associates the Ishmaelites and the Hagarites with Edom, Moab, Byblos, Ammon, Amalek, Philistia, Tyre and Assyria. Gen 37: 25-28 and Jdg. 8: 22-24 call the Midianites Ishmaelites. 2 Sam 17: 25 and 1 Chr 27: 30 refer to individual Ishmaelites. For Kedar see Gen 25: 13.

[194] Knauf, *Ismael*, 1-45; *id.*, "Ishmaelites", ABD, III, 515-519; Donner, *Geschichte*, 65.

[195] Knauf, *Ismael*, 83-85; Höfner, "Stammesgruppen", 422-423. Mentioning the supposed nocturnal character of Ruḍā, Fahd prefers to connect her with Venus (*Panthéon*, 145-146).

[196] Knauf, *Ismael*, 84-87. Höfner believes that the name means "reasonable, intelligent" ("Religionen", 374) which would appear to be an appropriate characterization of a Melqart/Yahweh figure.

[197] Nielsen, "Religion", 213-234; Höfner, "Religionen", 240-295. For political history and chronology see Kitchen, *Documentation*, 104-117.

Chart 11 Incense altar dedicated to the sun deity South Arabia (Louvre AO 5963)

at least the four kingdoms of Awsān, Ma'īn, Qatabān, and Hadramawt, the moon-deity – variously called Wadd, 'Amm and Sīn – was the supreme god of the state. Almaqah, the state-god of Saba', might also have been a moon-god although some authors now believe that he represented the deified sun.[198] 'Aṯtar was in each case the Venus-deity and Šams the sun-deity.[199] In many parts of the Semitic world, but particularly often in ancient South Arabia, the moon and the sun-deity are represented together in the form of a crescent and a disc, a juxtaposition indicating either union or opposition.[200] Hausa and Yoruba traditions teach us to consider the references to the celestial bodies in terms of either deites of the upper or the netherworld, the sun incarnating the former and the moon the latter.[201] At a later period when Israelite ideas became prevalent, the names of the leading deities of the discredited polytheistic system with its moon and sun party were replaced by their legendary cover-names Ishmael and Isaac. By the fourth century AD, the upper classes of South Arabia – whose religion is reflected in the inscriptional material – went over to the mono-

[198] For the general opinion see Nielsen, "Religion", 217, and Höfner, "Südarabien", 492. Garbini, followed by Beeston, suggested that Almaqah was a sun-deity ("Almaqah", 22; "Saba'", EI², VIII, 664-665).

[199] The only exception concerns Ma'in where the sun deity is called Nakrah (Höfner, "Religionen", 240-295; Nielsen, "Religion", 224-234).

[200] Cf. Rathjens, *Juden*, 16-17; Höfner, "Religionen", 261-295; Daum, *Religion*, 30-31; Gubel, "Symboles", DCPP, 431-432. Some authors consider the possibility that the disc represented Venus (Rathjen, *Juden*, 16).

[201] See above pp. 221-229.

theistic creed, not necessarily Christianity or Judaism, as can be deduced from the reference to the cult of "the Merciful, the Lord of Heaven".[202] This was the *terminus ad quem* at which South Arabian clans must definitively have preferred to substitute a legendary ancestor of the biblical tradition for their earlier concept of a divine progenitor.

The spread of religious ideas from North to South Arabia was considerably facilitated by the caravan trade on the incense route from Saba' and Ḥaḍramawt to Palestine and Syria. The most important items of trade on this route were myrrh from Ḥaḍramawt and frankincense from Ẓufār. In the eighth and the seventh century BC, the incense trade was controlled by the Ishmaelites of Šumu'il who dwelled at the northern end of the route. After the Persian period, when the Ishmaelite confederation disintegrated, Minean merchants in their turn seem to have extended their influence on the route far to the north by establishing trading colonies in the oases of Dedan and Hegra.[203] It may be noted that the Minean inscriptions of Dedan, dating apparently from the fourth century BC, provide evidence for the presence of Levites in the local temple of the moon-god Wadd.[204] Some authors thought that these Levites were priests from Israel who, having turned away from Yahweh, rendered service to Wadd.[205] In fact, it seems more likely that the Levites of Dedan were local cult servants attached to the temple of the Minean moon-god who could later be promoted to higher positions. Among the Yoruba, Levites – distinguishable by their clans and names – can be found as half-priestly officials of the Oduduwa/Wadd section of society.[206]

In two South Arabian kingdoms, Ma'īn in the north and Awsān in the south, Wadd was the state-god. In these kingdoms the king and the people considered themselves to be descendants of this moon-god.[207] In the sixth century BC, Awsān dominated the South Arabian coast from 'Aden to Qana' and the inland up to the desert of Ṣayhad. In the northwest it incorporated most of Qatabān and in the northeast extensive parts of Hadramawt. Reacting against the expansion of its southern neighbour, the king of Saba' Karib'il Watar I conquered the entire

[202] While Höfner considers South Arabian monotheism to be of Christian and Jewish inspiration, Beeston compares it to the Hanifite tendencies of Mecca ("Religionen", 280; "Saba'", EI², VIII, 664).

[203] Nielsen, "Incense", ABD, III, 407-408; Knauf, "Ishmaelites", ABD, III, 517-519. Müller and Beeston date the flourishing of Ma'īn from the forth to the second century BC ("Skizze", 51; "Saba'", EI², VIII, 664).

[204] Meyer, *Israeliten*, 88-89; Grimme, "Levitismus", 169-199.

[205] Meyer, *Israeliten*, 89. Grimme considers the Levites to have been in ancient Arabia "servants of a sanctuary" ("Levitismus", 198-199).

[206] Cf. Lange, "Ursprung des Bösen", 25-26, and below pp. 355-356, 368-369.

[207] Nielsen, "Religion", 217; Caskel, "Gottheiten", 108; von Wissmann, *Geschichte*, 46.

territory of Awsān towards 520 BC.[208] According to one of the inscriptions he left, he expelled the king Muratta'um from his capital, burned all the towns of the rival kingdom including those situated on the coast of the Gulf of Aden, killed sixteen thousand and emprisoned forty thousand of his enemies.[209] Subsequently the kingdom of Awsān ceased to exist for several centuries.[210] Most of its territory was occupied by Qatabān and Ḥaḍramawt, and for a long time the only moon cults practiced on the former territory of Awsān were those of the Qatabānian deity 'Amm and the Ḥaḍramawtian deity Sīn.[211]

In Somalia the name Daarood provides evidence of a former relationship of the corresponding clan-family to the moon-god Wadd. Indeed, on account of Arabic *dār* and related nouns in Hebrew and Phoenician meaning "tribe", "generation" and "family", it would appear that etymologically the name derives from *dār Wadd*, the "tribe of Wadd".[212] This interpretation is supported by the fact that Ismaa'iil, the second name of the clan-family, can be shown to correspond, in the Canaanite-Israelite world, generally to the legendary designation of the leading god of the netherworld – the sea-god Yamm of the Canaanites and the moon-god Wadd of the South Arabians. Hence Daarood and Ismaa'iil are two basically equivalent names, the first belonging to the mythological, the second to the legendary sphere. It is tempting to connect the arrival of the Daarood in Africa with the fall of Awsān, the kingdom on the opposite side of the Gulf of Aden where the moon-god Wadd had been worshipped as the state-deity.

The legend of the Daarood itself might refer to a movement of refugees across the Gulf of Aden following the defeat of Awsān. Naturally the Sabean records only mention those Awsānians who were killed or captured, although the successful flight of King Muratta'um may be inferred from the expression that he was "swept away".[213] The attack having been directed from the north against the south, many other Awsānians must have attempted to withdraw to the neighbouring coast of Africa. Such developments might be implied by the legend of

[208] The chronology adopted here is from Kitchen, *Documentation*, 196-197, 242.

[209] Translation of RES 3945 by Müller, "Inschriften", TUAT, I, 653-656. For the identification of the place names mentioned in the inscription see von Wissmann, *Geschichte*, 34-35, 159, 352 (map).

[210] Karib'il Watar I ruled according to Kitchen from 525 to 500 BC (*Documentation*, 196, 242).

[211] Von Wissmann, *Geschichte*, 34-35, 153-159; Höfner, "Religionen", 390; Beeston, "Katabān", EI², IV, 776.

[212] On Arab. *dār* as a synonym of *qabīla* "tribe" see Lane, *Lexicon*, III, 931. For Hebrew and Phoenician *dôr*, *de* meaning among others "place of residence" and "family" see HAL, I, 209.

[213] Lit.: he destroyed many towns… "until he swept away Awsān and its king Muratta'um" (RES 3945: 5, transl. TUAT, I, 654).

Daarood which relates the crucial events of the past in the form of a benign family conflict: because he was threatened to be killed by his uncle the king (of Saba'), Daarood fled (from Awsān) into the wilderness of Africa, got married there, asserted his ascendancy over the local people and had many descendants. On the basis of this legend, the Daarood consider Arabia even now to have been the starting point of their migration to Africa.[214]

Certainly the Horn of Africa was not a *terra incognita* for the Awsānians. These enterprising South Arabian traders must have had long-established trading posts on the African coast in order to gain access, as the Egyptians had before them, to African varieties of frankincense and myrrh.[215] According to the *Periplus Maris Erythraei*, in the first century AD myrrh and frankincense were exported from various ports of the Horn of Africa – Avalitês/Zayla', Malaô/Berbera, Mundu/Hiis, Mosyllon/Boosaaso, 'Aluula, and Tabai/Hurdiyo.[216] As the quality of African varieties was superior to Arabian varieties it was not only shipped to Egypt by the Red Sea but also to ports on the northern shore of the Gulf of Aden.[217] The incense trading ports of the Somali coast, all ruled by nomadic Barbaroi, extended from Zayla' to Cape Guardafui.[218] South of Opone/Ras Hafun began the land of Azania which in the first century AD was dominated by the Himyarite kings of Saba' and Dhū Raydān who ruled through their port of Muza/Mukhā west of the Straits of Bab al-Mandeb.[219]

The Awsānian merchants operating from 'Aden and Qana' were no doubt the most active South Arabian traders in Africa before the destruction of their kingdom by Saba'. They then had a second period of influence in Africa when a new line of independent Awsānian kings ruled from about 140 BC to 15 AD.[220]

[214] Lewis, *Peoples*, 14; id., *Blood*, 104; and see above pp. 255-256.

[215] Cf. Drake-Brockman, *Somaliland*, 2, 234-260; Lewis, *Peoples*, 73; Ullendorff, *Ethiopians*, 45-46.

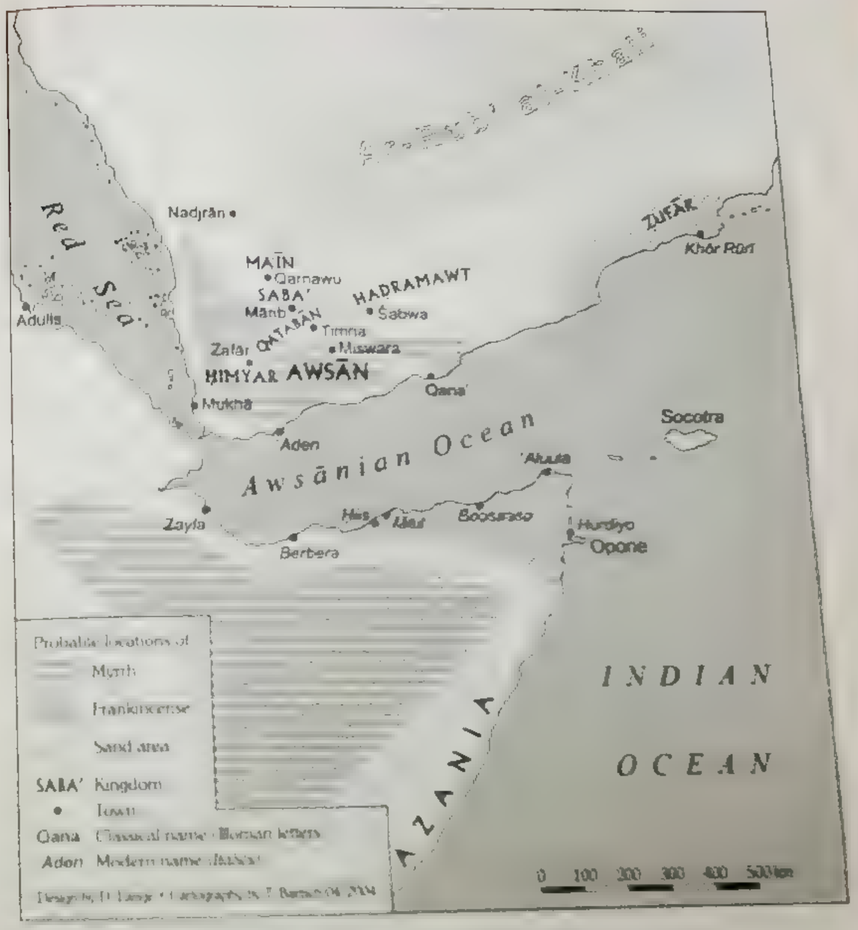
[216] The anonymous *Periplus* is now dated to 40-70 AD (Casson, *Periplus*, 7; Kitchen, *Documentation*, XXII, 22-25). On the importance of the ancient Somalian incense production see Casson, *Periplus*, 119 (map), 120, 122, and Desanges, *Recherches*, 298-300, 304.

[217] An anonymous Greek geographer writing around 100 BC remarks on the Sabeans' wealth that it depended on the trade in aromatics, those imported from Africa and their own. Similarly Pliny notes that African myrrh was the best (*Nat. hist.*, 12. 66, 69).

[218] The trees of myrrh and frankincense have to be treated several times before the precious resin can be tapped. The greatest producers of myrrh are the Dhulbahante and the Ogaadeen, those of frankincense the Habar Tolja'lo, the Warsangeli and the Majeerteen (Drake-Brockman, *Somaliland*, 241, 256; Paulitschke, *Ethnographie*, I, 219). For the probable location of the producing areas see Groom, *Frankincense*, 99; Martinetz, *Weihrauch*, 1; Casson, *Periplus*, 119.

[219] *Periplus*, 16, 22-23; Casson, *Periplus*, 7-14, 115-132.

[220] Kitchen, *Documentation*, 76-79, 188-189, 241.



Map 4 South Arabia and the Horn of Africa in classical times

According to the *Periplus*, "some ancient right subordinates Azania to the kingdom which had become the first in South Arabia".[221] This statement seems to refer to the successive imperial states of South Arabia: Saba', Awsān, Qatabān

[221] *Periplus*, 16, Freeman-Grenville, *East African Coast*, 1. Casson's translation implies that South Arabian domination of the East African coast began with the rise of kingdoms in South Arabia (*Periplus*, 61). The *Periplus* contrasts the rule of Himyar and Saba' over Azania with the rule of Hadramawt over Socotra (Casson, *Periplus*, 69, 149-151).

and Himyar. As we have seen, towards the middle of the first century AD, South Arabian suzerainty over the East African coast lay in the hands of the Himyarite rulers of Saba' and Dhū Raydān.

Traces of an earlier domination of the East African coast by Awsān seem to survive in the related name of Azania. It is often overlooked that Pliny, who provides the oldest information, applies this name to the two seas of South Arabia: the "Azanian sea" towards Adulis, i.e. the southern end of the Red Sea, and the "Azanian ocean" corresponding to the Gulf of Aden.[222] While the localization of the "Azanian sea" in the Red Sea may derive from Pliny's misunderstanding of earlier Hellenistic texts, its identity with the Gulf of Aden is confirmed in another instance where the island of Dioscuridu/Socotra is situated in the "Azanian sea".[223] This early application of the name Azania to the Gulf of Aden makes a northern derivation of the name more likely than an African connection – after all even today the gulf is called after an Arabian and not a Somali, let alone an East African, town or territory. Therefore the general assumption that the name Azania has a common basis with the name Zanj, used by the Arab geographers to designate the black African inhabitants of the East African coast, has to be discarded.[224] It is far more likely that the East African coast was called Azania in consequence of early Awsānian domination which was probably renewed in the first century BC.[225] But also in this case the connection of the name Azania with the kingdom of Awsān should not necessarily be conceived linguistically. In view of the parallel position of the Aznā in Hausa society and the etymological relation of the latter term to a Canaanite name and epithet of Môt, an equivalent naming of the East African coastal society is plausible.[226] Historically the Himyarite expansion at the beginning of the first century AD might explain how the name disappeared from the South Arabian coast but survived in East Africa.[227]

On the basis of their own information, the author of the *Periplus* (middle of the first century AD) and Ptolemy (second half of the second century AD) re-

[222] Pliny, *Nat. hist.*, 6. 172. With respect to the "Azanian ocean", Pliny notes: *oceanum qui influit Azanium appellant* (*Nat. hist.*, 6. 108).

[223] Pliny, *Nat. hist.*, 6. 153. Dihle expresses doubts that the *Azanium mare* corresponded to the southern Red Sea (ANRW, II, 9. 2, 562-566).

[224] Dihle, ANRW, II, 9, 2, 564 n. 61; Casson, *Periplus*, 136. See also Fage, *History*, 21.

[225] Although the emendation of a passage localising Menouthesias/Zanzibar opposite the "Ausanic coast" appears to be mistaken (Casson, *Periplus*, 252-253), the etymology of Azania and the implied predominant historical role of Awsān on the coast of the Gulf of Aden leads to the same conclusion.

[226] The term *'zz* "strength" appears in the South Arabian inscriptions (Beeston, *Dictionary*, 24). A better established parallel name of Canaanite origin is the Hausa *bòrī*, the Yoruba *ọbọrọ* and the Somali *boorane* (Lange, "Erbe, II", 135-136, and above section 3).

[227] Cf. Müller, "Skizze", 52, and Kitchen, *Documentation*, 79.

strict the name Azania to the East African coast south of Ras Hafun.[228] Extending up to Rhapta, the last known port of the East African coast, Azania must have been profoundly influenced by the Awsānian domination before it came under the rule of Himyar, otherwise the application of a term related to this South Arabian kingdom to the core region of the later Swahili civilisation would hardly be understandable. In the middle of the first century AD, Rhapta was administered through tax-farming by the Arab skippers of the South Arabian port of Mukhā. The intermarriage with local women noted by the *Periplus* must have led from an early period onward to the steady integration of Arab men into the local sedentary population.[229] Slaves were probably – as in West Africa – a major export from the East African coast. The *Periplus*, referring to the shipping of "better-quality slaves" from Tabai/Hurdiyo near Opone/Ras Hafun, may have omitted mentioning the export of ordinary slaves from further south as this practice was perhaps well-known. Evidence for an ancient and ongoing slave trade from East Africa is provided by the presence of an important Zanj population in southern Iraq, which, before the great insurrection in the second half of the ninth century, revolted twice in the second half of the seventh century.[230]

In spite of an early influx of people from Awsān, the northern coast of the Horn of Africa was not called Azania. Judging from their nature in the nineteenth century, the ports of this coast were not permanently inhabited. During the dry season from April to August, the nomads withdrew with their herds to the more fertile interior.[231] In contrast to the inhabitants of the towns stretching from Mogadisho further south, immigrants from South Arabia in this region were forced by climate to adopt a transhumant way of life. Due to their nomadism and corresponding tribal power, the *Periplus* applies the term Barbaroi to the inhabitants of the northern coast, while the East African coast from Mogadisho to the south – with its permanent towns – is referred to by the more prestigious notion of Azania.[232] After their crushing defeat at the hands of the Sabeans, the seafaring people of Awsān might have either joined their brethren of the Horn of African and integrated into their semi-nomadic society or sought refuge with their rela-

[228] *Periplus*, 15-16; Casson, *Periplus*, 136, 252-253; Ptol., *Geog.*, I, 17; Stevenson, *Ptolemy*, 38.

[229] *Periplus*, 16; Casson, *Periplus*, 45-46, 61. Most authors believe that the local East Africans were Cushites and not Bantu (Fage, *History*, 21-22; Casson, *Periplus*, 134-136).

[230] Popović, *Révolte*, 62-63. I am grateful to Ulrich Rinn who drew my attention to the early revolts of the Zanj.

[231] Paulitschke, *Ethnographie*, I, 120; Lewis, *Peoples*, 90-92.

[232] *Periplus*, 7, 18; Casson, *Periplus*, 55-61. At one instance the *Periplus* calls the inhabitants of Azania likewise Barbaroi, while Ptolemy mentions Barbaroi living beyond Rhapta (*Periplus*, 17; *Geog.*, I, 17).

tives in the sedentary communities of Azania on the East African coast.[233] In each case they were out of the reach of their enemies.

In their African domain the Awsānian ancestors of the northern Somali clan-families replicated the social structure of their South Arabian homeland in the form of a dualistic clan system with a subsystem of reciprocal representation.[234] They used two sets of ethnonyms, one referring to the former clan-deity and the other to its legendary equivalent. Thus, in the section of the moon-god, all the clans of the Daarood, including the Awrtable, tended to consider themselves the "people of Wadd" and descendants of Ishmael, while only the Awrtable preserved an Israelite tradition of their own by claiming descent from Joseph.[235] Similarly in the section of the sun-god, the Ishmaelites seem to have preserved the epithet of their former deity in the form of the name Magaad by calling all the descendants of Isaaq who are not the issue of the Ethiopian wife (Habar Habuusheed), Habar Magaadle "people of Magaad". Indeed, the names Magaado and Magaad, applied to the equivalent of Sarah and her father, appear to be derived from the Arabic divine name *majid* "glorious, exalted, splendid" which, like the personal name ʿAbd al-Wadūd, probably referred back to the moon-god Wadd.[236] Only the worshippers of the sun-goddess, being more amenable to monotheism, dropped their pagan name entirely and just maintained its legendary equivalent Isaaq.

Altogether, the names and legends of the northern Somali clan-families indicate that their ancestors were familiar with the details of the biblical genealogical charter as it applied to their specific clan organization before they had left South Arabia. The absence of any consciousness that their own legendary clan ancestors corresponded to Koranic figures bearing the same names, clearly shows that these names must have been adopted in South Arabia several centuries before the rise of Islam. In fact, the process of substituting legendary for mythical names was already well under way when the infiltration of nomadic Arabs began to undermine the sedentary basis of South Arabian kingdoms from the first century AD onward.[237] Since the organizational structure of the northern Somali clan-

[233] Archaeologists have not yet been able to identify any of the sites of the different towns mentioned in the classical sources.

[234] For the Somali clan-families see above chart 9 pp. 258-259.

[235] Folk etymology explains the name Awrtable as being composed of *aur* "male pack camel" and *tab-leh* "having skill". A more satisfying etymology should perhaps take account of Epigraphic South Arabic *wrt* "unprotected situation" (Beeston, *Dictionary*, 23).

[236] Lane, *Lexicon*, VII, 2690. For the pronunciation of *jim* in Epigraphic South Arabic as *gim* see Beeston, "Inschriften", 106. The root *mgd* is also attested in Hebrew, Palmyrean and Epigraphic South Arabic (HAL, II, 515).

[237] The term Arabs (*ʿrb, ʿrbn*) appears in the kingdom of Saba' in the first century AD and in Hadramawt in the third century AD (Eph'al, *Ancient Arabs*, 8). Belonging to an earlier

families was subsequently not affected by any further massive arrival of people from outside or by any other historical upheaval, the South Arabian clan heritage from classical times is still recognisable under the overlay of Islamic and other changes.

10. The Spread of the Canaanite State to West Africa

In West Africa the Canaanite dualistic society was most likely established through the agency of Phoenician officials and traders from North Africa. From the beginning of the first millenium BC onward the Phoenicians spread their Canaanite culture to the whole area between the Gulf of Syrte and Mogador on the Atlantic coast. On the basis of later evidence, some historians think that Israelites participated in this African expansion.[238] The Phoenicians did not settle only on the North African coast. Epigraphic and archaeological remains bear witness to their agricultural settlements in the interior of the country. The Libyphoenicians mentioned by classical writers testify to the spread of Canaanite language and culture among the Berber population of North Africa. Punic inscriptions found in Garama further show that they penetrated into the interior of the continent at least as far as Fezzan, an extended oasis which lay on the way to the Lake Chad region.[239]

What instigated the Phoenicians to extend their activities beyond Fezzan to West Africa? It is often supposed that gold was the most attractive object of their African trade.[240] But in the Central Sudan gold was rare and could not possibly have provided the basis for an ongoing flow of goods through the Sahara. On the Mediterranean Sea the Phoenicians traded in precious and ordinary metals, timber, luxury and other refined goods, textiles and weapons.[241] It is less well-known that the Phoenicians also traded extensively in human beings. Homer and Herodotus considered them dangerous pirates and kidnappers.[242] Various books of the Old Testament describe them as slave traders eager to acquire war captives in order to sell them to distant lands.[243] As a result of their far-reaching trading

period the ancestors of the two northern Somali clan-families were therefore not Arabs but Proto-Arabs.

[238] Slouschz, *Travels*, 210-224; Oliver/Fage, *Short History*, 42. On the Phoenician expansion see Culican, "Phoenicia", 485-490, and Niemeyer, "Phönizische Expansion", 153-175.

[239] Lipiński, "Garamantes", DCPP, 184; Ruprechtsberger, *Garamanten*, 72.

[240] Gsell, *Histoire*, IV, 440; Jenkins/Lewis, *Carthaginian Gold*, 25-26; Huß, *Geschichte*, 173.

[241] Moscati, *Phönizier*, 341-347; Culican, "Phoenicia", 464-466.

[242] Od. 14, 297; 15, 452; Hdt I, 1; 2, 54.

[243] Ez. 27, 13; Jl 4, 6; Am 1, 9.

contacts, the Phoenicians were particularly well acquainted with different methods of enslavement, and the volume of their slave trade appears to have reached greater proportions than that of other Mediterranean people.[244] Black slaves, rather than gold, are therefore more likely to have constituted the bulk of the trans-Saharan trade since earliest times.[245] South of Kawar, northern traders may have followed the trail of the local salt transport existing since the pre-Christian period.[246]

From the sixth century onward, Carthage was the main Phoenician power trading in slaves. From the two Roman-Carthaginian treaties it appears that many slaves were obtained by organized brigandage. Concluded in 509 BC, the first treaty forbade the Carthaginians to build forts in Latium and to spend the night on land. This implies that Carthaginian pirates and brigands regularly attacked towns and villages in the neighbourhood of Rome in order to win booty.[247] Attacking in the early morning to take the inhabitants by surprise is a well-known strategy from classical and modern evidence for seizing and enslaving human beings.[248] By reducing the scale of brigandage in its neighbourhood by treaty, Rome insisted on its hegemonic claims without yet being able to reinforce them by military means. The second treaty from 326 BC prevented the Carthaginians from selling enslaved people from towns allied with Rome in Roman markets.[249] Hence, there can be no doubt that in the fourth century Punic slave-raiding groups from North Africa were raiding the Italian coast in search of human spoils. A turning point was reached when Carthage lost its possessions in Sicily after the First Punic War (264-241) and when it had to give up Sardinia and Corsica a few years later. By that time, Rome had become strong enough to eliminate the threat of Carthaginian raids on Italian coasts.

Italy and other Mediterranean countries were probably not the only slaving grounds of the Carthaginians. Numerous iconographic representations show that black African slaves were widely known and appreciated in the Greek and Roman world.[250] They were employed as doorkeepers, as servicemen in public baths,

[244] Movers emphasises the importance of the Phoenician slave trade (*Phönizier*, IV, 6, 70-86). See also Moscati, *Phöniker*, 164, 347; Gucht, "Esclavage", DCPP, 157; Markoe, *Phoenicians*, 105.

[245] Bovill and Fage mention gold and slaves on equal terms (*Golden Trade*, 21-23; *History*, 46-48).

[246] Vikør thinks that the reference of Herodotus to salt of the Sahara might imply an ancient export to the south (*Oasis*, 141-142, 147).

[247] Polyb. 3. 23 1-6; Huß, *Geschichte*, 86-90; Ameling, *Karthago*, 130-132.

[248] Hdt., 6. 16. 2; Diod., 15. 14.4; *Syll.*^{3}, 521 (Amorgos); Lyon, *Narrative*, 255; Nachtigal, *Sahara*, II, 627-629; Ameling, *Karthago*, 131.

[249] Polyb. 3. 24. 5-6; Huß, *Geschichte*, 149-155; Ameling, *Karthago*, 132-134.

[250] Snowden, *Blacks*, 33-97; Desanges, "Iconographie", 246-268.

as musicians, as grooms, and as soldiers.[251] Because of their distant origins, flight was practically impossible. Where did they come from? It is often suggested that Egypt was the main provider of black African slaves.[252] However, since in medieval and modern times Egypt itself relied – due to insufficient supply from the upper Nile and Darfur – in part on West African slave importations, there are reasons to suppose that in earlier periods the situation was similar.[253] Thus, the central Saharan route leading from Tripoli via Fezzan and Kawar to Lake Chad may also have been in ancient times the main provider of black slaves either by way of Leptis Magna, its direct Mediterranean outlet, or indirectly via Carthage or Egypt.[254]

The conditions of travelling were particularly favourable on the central Sahara route between Tripoli and Lake Chad. Here, watering places were never more than three days apart. Moreover, the two widely-spaced oases of Fezzan and Kawar provided good opportunities for rest and replenishment of provisions and considerably reduced the hardships of surmounting the two thousand kilometre distance between Tripoli and Lake Chad. Loose sand only created serious difficulties for sixty kilometres immediately south of Kawar where a number of sand dunes posed serious obstacles for animals. Human beings were less affected by this barrier.[255] Owing to the natural advantages of the remainder of the Garamantian route, it was much easier to cross the Sahara in its central part than in the west between the Maghrib and the Niger Bend or in the east between the Cyrenaica and Wadai.

In earliest times donkeys and oxen were used as pack-animals to carry indispensable water, food and firewood supplies on the way through the Sahara. Traders travelled in horse-drawn chariots and later on horseback.[256] Some servants, used to the desert, and conveyors of caravans walked occasionally, slaves always on foot – as witnessed by European travellers of the nineteenth century.[257] Likewise from later accounts it is known that slaves were sometimes forced to carry loads on their heads.[258] When diminishing rainfall transformed most of the

[251] Desanges "Iconographie", 265; Snowden, *Blacks*, 165-191; Schumacher, *Sklaverei*, 43.

[252] Bang, "Herkunft", 248; Desanges, "Iconographie", 257.

[253] Mauny, *Tableau*, 374-379; 428-473; Daget/Renault, *Traites*, 40-44; Austen, "Islamic slave trade", 214-248; Rohlfs, *Quer*, reed. 1984, 111.

[254] Gsell mentions specifically the east route from Fezzan to Bornu (*Histoire*, IV, 139). Mattingly considers that in the Roman period slaves were the most important commodity from the south imported via the Garamantes (*Tripolitania*, 156).

[255] Nachtigal, *Sahara*, I, 545-550; Rohlfs, *Reise*, I, 40-41.

[256] Bovill, *Golden Trade*, 15-17; Mauny, *Tableau*, 282-284; 394-395; 435.

[257] Nachtigal, *Sahara*, I, 228-229; Mauny, *Tableau*, 277-279.

[258] Barth, *Travels*, III, 606; E. Vogel quoted by Weis, "Bornustrasse", 440.

Sahara progressively into uninhabitable wasteland, the reduction in the number of people made the caravan routes more secure. Furthermore, at the beginning of the Christian era the introduction of the camel to North Africa and its adoption by nomadic tribes facilitated trade across the desert considerably.[259] In the end it was hardly more dangerous for North Africans, although certainly more strenuous, to cross the central Sahara on the Garamantian route than to sail from one end of the Mediterranean Sea to the other.

Classical authors were badly informed about trans-Saharan enterprises. They mention a single crossing of the Sahara by five Nasamones from the Cyrenaican hinterland and a repeated crossing by the Carthaginian Mago.[260] Furthermore the Garamantes are said to have used four-horsed chariots to raid the Troglodyte Ethiopians.[261] These instances of Saharan activities might not have been as isolated as generally believed. Judging from the pattern of Mediterranean trade and warfare, they could have been a facet of the African slave trade set in motion by the Phoenicians.

It is only during the Roman period that the veil covering the activities of the northerners in Fezzan and the Central Sudan is slightly lifted. On the authority of Marinus of Tyre, Ptolemy mentions two Romans, the officer Septimus Flaccus and the trader Julius Maternus, who travelled beyond Garama and reached the country of the Ethiopians in the far south.[262] While Flaccus undertook the journey with his own army, Maternus from Leptis Magna accompanied the king of the Garamantes in an expedition against Agisymba "a land of the Ethiopians, where the rhinoceroses gather".[263] Apparently the king wanted towards 90 AD to re-establish a tributary relationship which was profitable enough to warrant the organization of a military expedition across the Sahara against a rebellious vassal.[264]

[259] Demougeot, "Chameau", 209-247; Weis, "Bornustrasse", 456-462; Lhote, *Chars rupestres*, 45-62; Bulliet, *Camel*, 111-140.

[260] Hdt., 2. 32; Athenaeus, *Deipnosophistai*, 2. 44 e (Mauny, *Siècles obscurs*, 120).

[261] Hdt., 2. 32-33; 4. 183.

[262] Some authors believe that Septimus Flaccus and Suellius Flaccus were the same but Desanges argues against this identification (*Recherches*, 211-21).

[263] Ptol., *Geog.*, 1. 8, 4-5; Stevenson, *Ptolemy*, 32; Law, "Garamantes", 197.

[264] Ptolemy first mentions an "expedition against the Ethiopians" and then claims that the Garamantes and the Ethiopians had the same king (*Geog.*, 1. 8, 4-5). On the dating of the expedition see Desanges, *Recherches*, 200-209.

Most authors situate Agisymba in either Tibesti, Kawar or Aïr.[265] However, the localization of Agisymba should be seen in the light of the good travel conditions on the central Saharan route. Moreover, Ptolemy clearly states that both expeditions were directed southward, the first needing three and the second four months to reach the Ethiopians. It might be that the time given included also the return journey. In the nineteenth century Barth covered within 51 days the distance from Lake Chad to Murzuq, the capital of Fezzan.[266] This is equivalent to an average of 26 km per day. A well-organized small army corps – like that of 'Uqba b. Nāfi' using horses and camels in the seventh century – could cross the eight hundred kilometres between Fezzan and Kawar within a fortnight, which amounts to an average of 57 km per day.[267] Perhaps Flaccus, who was not sure of his return base in Fezzan, reached only Kawar like 'Uqba b. Nāfi' six centuries later. By travelling in the company of the king of the Garamantes, Maternus was in a far better position to arrive in the region of Lake Chad, where the earliest Arab geographers place the kingdom of Kanem. Also, the Lake Chad region is certainly the best candidate for the country of the rhinoceroses.[268] The purpose of the expedition was most likely the submission of a rebellious vassal state which had to deliver an annual tribute in slaves. Far-reaching slaving raids were organized in the early Islamic period and in the nineteenth century from Fezzan to Kanem.[269]

The penetration of Northerners to the south of Fezzan is likewise suggested by archaeological evidence. Representations of chariots found on two sites south of Fezzan indicate that a minor chariot-route may have led to Kawar.[270] One nineteenth century European traveller found a broken marble column which

[265] Mauny and Desanges favour the region between Kawar and Tibesti (*Siècles obscurs*, 124; *Recherches*, 199). Bovill thinks of Tibesti (*Golden Trade*, 36) while Lhote prefers Aïr (*Chars rupestres*, 123). Vikor thinks that trans-Saharan trade changed from southwest and southeast from Fezzan to due south only in the late Roman period (*Oasis*, 147).

[266] Barth, *Travels*, III, 605-620. Denham needed 68 and 61, Rohlfs 75 and Nachtigal 71 days (*Narrative*, 1-84; *Reise*, I, 11-48; *Sahara*, I, 491-564).

[267] Ibn 'Abd al-Hakam in Levtzion/Hopkins, *Corpus*, 12-13.

[268] Law and Hutš look for Agisymba in the region of Lake Chad ("Garamantes", 197; "Mittelniederwelt", 61). Weis notes that the rhinoceros was first found on the northern shores of Lake Chad ("Bornustrasse", 450).

[269] Al Ya'qubi in Levtzion/Hopkins, *Corpus*, 22; Lyon, *Narrative*, 129-130; Denham *et al.*, *Narrative*, II, 94. Bovill supposes that the expedition of the Garamantes corresponded to a slave raid (*Golden Trade*, 36).

[270] Two engraved chariots were found close to Jado and two other representations of chariots north of Jado in Blaka (Lhote, *Chars rupestres*, 196, 256 n. 119). Lhote concludes from the rarity of chariot representations near Kawar that this oasis was in ancient times Tubu and not Berber territory (*ibid.*, 197).

he attributed to the Romans at the well of Meshru ninety kilometres south of Fezzan.[271] At another well more than three hundred kilometres south of Fezzan, French colonial officials discovered the existence of an ancient rectangular structure of squared stone also believed to have been Roman.[272] From the description of the expedition of the Arab conqueror 'Uqba b. Nāfi' to Kawar it appears that al-Qasaba, the main settlement of that important oasis, was already by the middle of the seventh century a flourishing trading station.[273] Finally, it is at the southern end of the central Saharan trade route that from the ninth century onward Arab geographers noted the existence of the kingdom of Kanem, the most stable polity of West Africa.[274] Since this state of the Lake Chad region provided the outside world with a continuous flow of slaves throughout the Islamic period,[275] its precursor in classical times might have performed a similar economic function.

The large-scale Garamantian expedition witnessed by a citizen of Leptis Magna should be seen in a broader historical context. Carthage established its suzerainty over Leptis Magna and its two twin towns at the end of the sixth century BC.[276] From this time onward we may reckon with the possibility of intensive Punic enterprises on the central Saharan route and beyond. The rise of Garamantian power based in Fezzan could have been the result of early trans-Saharan trade. As long as the authority of the coastal city states remained strong, the Garamantes seem to have operated mainly as conveyors and caravanners of the north-bound trade generated by the Punic raiding and trading stations established in the Central Sudan. When Carthage, pressured by Rome, lost its influence on the coastal towns of Tripolitania, the Garamantes gradually asserted their independence and, with respect to the Central Sudan, followed in the footsteps of the Phoenicians. The tendency to reserve the benefits of the Sudanic slave trade for themselves may partly lie behind the early antagonism between the Garamantes and Rome. It was only towards the end of the first century AD, perhaps in consequence of the use of camels, that Rome could force the Garamantes to adopt a more cooperative

[271] Rohlfs first connected the column of Bir Meshru with the Garamantes (*Reise*, I, 16) and later with the Romans (*Quer durch Afrika*, reed. 1984, 144; see also *Voyages*, II, 199).

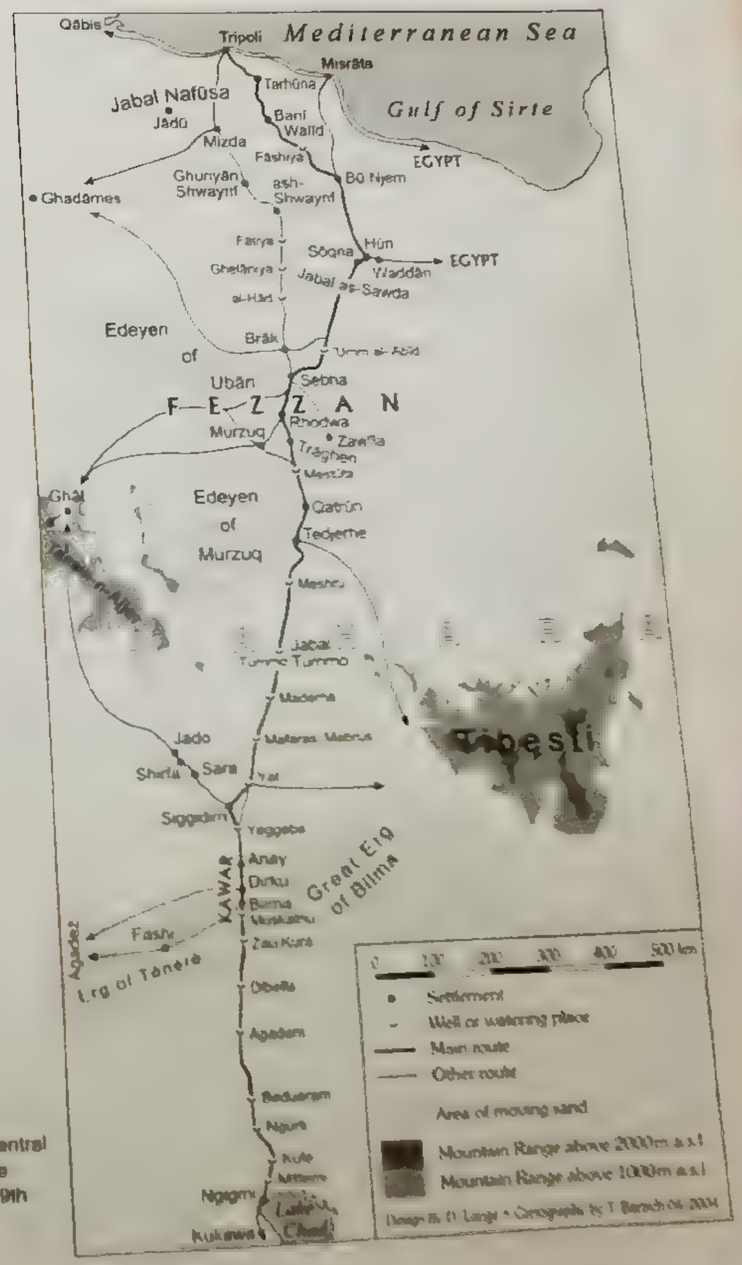
[272] Deberz mentions in connection with the stone structure at the well of Taradjihida, 3.5 km west of the well of Madema, the discovery of an apparently Roman sword and precious stones of the pre-Islamic period (see Rohlfs, *Voyages*, II, 204 n. 174).

[273] Ibn 'Abd al-Hakam *in:* Levtzion/Hopkins, *Corpus*, 12-13; Lange/Berthoud, "Qasaba", 21-22; *id.*, "Slave trade" (in press).

[274] Ibn Qutayba and al-Ya'qūbī *in:* Levtzion/Hopkins, *Corpus*, 15, 21.

[275] Urvoy, *Histoire du Bornou*, 150; Mauny, *Tableau*, 435; Renault/Daget, *Traites*, 165-169.

[276] Gsell, *Histoire*, I, 372-373; 455-459; Huß, *Geschichte*, 73-74; Rebuffat, "Tripoli", "Leptis Magna", DCPP, 257-258, 471.



Map 5 The central Saharan trade route in the 19th century

approach.[277] In fact, in this period the two Roman expeditions beyond Fezzan which might have been facilitated by camel transport took place.[278] In the south we may discern in the rebellion of Agisymba the first unsuccessful attempt by a vassal state to change a one-sided prestational system into balanced trading relations.

The Garamantes re-entered into the light of history in 569 AD when they sent envoys to the coast to request incorporation "into the peace of the Roman state and into the Christian faith".[279] This move, implying the extension of Byzantine influence to Fezzan, can best be explained by the need to protect the precarious but profitable trans-Saharan trade. In exchange for such support, which may have involved the building of castles in the southern oasis of Fezzan,[280] the Garamantes might have dispatched – judging from later evidence – annual contingents of slaves to the Byzantine governor at the coast. There are indications that Byzantine influence reached further south than Fezzan. Archaeological traces of Christianity have been found in the fortified village of Jado, north of Kawar, and in the twelfth century one of the towns of Kawar was still called by the Christian name Qasr Umm 'Isā "castle of the mother of Jesus".[281] Elements of the Kanem-Bornu king list and later traditions of the Central Sudan suggest that Christianity spread even further south.[282] A considerable amount of trade on the central trans-Saharan route in the early Islamic period is indirectly evidenced by the expedition of the Arab leader 'Uqba b. Nāfi' in 666 AD to Fezzan and Kawar. At such a decisive moment of their North African conquests, the Arabs must have had precise ideas about what to expect from such a daring enterprise before they interrupted their advance to the west by turning south. Imposing on Waddan, Fezzan and Kawar annual tributes of slaves, they certainly used a well established route and

[277] Bovill, *Golden Trade*, 38; Law, "*Garamantes*", 190-196; Mauny, *Siècles*, 122-124.

[278] Bovill, *Golden Trade*, 39; Weis, "Bornustrasse", 462. Bulliet believes that the southern nomads adopted the camel before the Romans (*Camel*, 138-139).

[279] Cf. Iohannes Biclarensis, *Chronica Minora* 2 (ed. Th. Mommsen 1894), 212; transl. Wolf, *Conquerors*, 63.

[280] Ruprechtsberger suggests that the rectangular mud-brick castles of Fezzan reflect Byzantine workmanship (*Garamanten*, 77), while Weis notes the similarity of Qasr Laroku, 35 km west of Garama, with Roman buildings for defense further north ("Bornustrasse", 432).

[281] George/Ziegert, "Zitadelle", 157-182. Al-Idrīsī mentions Qasr Umm 'Isa at several instances (Levtzion/Hopkins, *Corpus*, 123, 173, 192). Ibn Sa'īd applies the name of Qasr 'Isa to Jāda/Jado north-northwest of Kawar (Vikør, *Oasis*, 168).

[282] The name of one of the early kings might have been Paul (Lange, *Diwān*, 67 n. 1). The late fifteenth century reports of the Portuguese from Benin concerning the cross symbol of the far-away inland ruler called Ogane may concern Kanem-Bornu (cf. Hodgkin, *Nigerian Perspectives*, 122, 124). See also Gray, "Christian traces", 383-393.

followed a tributary praxis earlier employed by their Byzantine and Roman predecessors.[283]

Further south, the Carthaginians might have been active slave-traders beginning in the sixth century BC. In response to Mediterranean market conditions they seem to have established trading posts and transit stations. The Garamantes, as perhaps also the Libyphoenicians of the North African hinterland, were important as conveyors and intermediaries but they could not have transmitted market demands from the far north to the far south. Moreover, slaves were not a commodity that can be supposed to have been readily available in sub-Saharan Africa. They had to be "produced" and their long foot march across the Sahara had to be carefully organized in order to avoid high losses. We know from their ravages in Italy that the Carthaginians were efficient slave raiders. Via their vassal town of Leptis Magna, they could easily have found ways and means to proceed to the lands of the Sahel. In the region of Lake Chad and to the west of it they may have established the same kind of trading posts and garrisons they used to build on the shores of the Mediterranean. However, south of the Sahara, Phoenician foundations were apparently better rooted and more firmly integrated into the local population. Through intermarriage, the adoption of local customs, and an ongoing process of localization they finally became the nucleus of a number of Sudanic states.[284] Such a process of cultural transfers would seem to best explain the striking parallels between the Central Sudanic and the Canaanite-Israelite cult-mythological patterns. Owing to the slower rhythm of change in societies south of the Sahara, the basic structure of Canaanite state organization is here still recognisable in spite of subsequent transformations.[285]

Further glimpses into the political situation at the southern end of the Garamantian route may be obtained from the Bayajidda legend. By mentioning two consecutive heros – the Queen of Daura and Bayajidda – the legend refers to two different immigrations. The first started from Canaan and reached Hausaland

[283] Ibn 'Abd al-Hakam in Levtzion/Hopkins, *Corpus*, 12-13; Lange, "Slave trade" (in press). Previous authors usually took the literary topos of the author that the local guide knew no country beyond Kawar at face value (Bovill, *Golden Trade*, 245; Law, "Garamantes", 197). Vikør first follows the established view but then stipulates that Uqba travelled on a well-known route and assumes that Kawar was an entrepot of the trans-Saharan slave trade (Oasis, 148, 150-151).

[284] Meillassoux explains the rise of medieval West African states by their function to capture slaves (*Anthropology*, 50-52). Ullendorff suggests a similar process of state-building for the Islamic polities of Ethiopia (*Ethiopia*, 60, 124).

[285] Lange, "Ursprung des Bösen", 4-5; id., "Slave trade" (in press). It would appear that iron technology and the horse were introduced into sub-Saharan Africa at the same time (cf. Mauny, *Siècles obscurs*, 61-76; Fage, *History*, 17-47).

by way of North Africa, while the second began in Baghdad and came to Hausaland via Bornu. In view of the overall relevance of the Canaanite-Phoenician background for Hausa culture, it would appear that the two lines of immigration reflect the two basic tendencies of Canaanite-Israelite history, the local aspect by the queens from Canaan and her numerous followers, and the extraneous Baghdadian or rather Aššur/Babylon aspect by the isolated male hero.[286] However, it would be wrong to reduce the legend solely to its ancient Near Eastern prototype. A local West African element would seem to be implied by the Bornoan suzerainty. The two lines merging in Daura would further appear to refer to the two sections of Hausa society, the Queen of Daura and her son Bawo to the Hausā, and the Baghdadian hero Bayajidda and his son with the concubine – who in some versions was already pregnant when she arrived with the hero in Daura – to the Aznā.[287] It may be noted in passing that according to this interpretation the Aznā were the secondary and foreign people and not, as often supposed, the primary and local population.[288]

In terms of local history in the *longue durée* the provenance of Bayajidda from Bornu probably reflects an ancient and long lasting suzerainty of the Chadic state over Hausaland. Acknowledging their dependency on Bornu, all the Hausa states – the seven Hausā as well as the seven Banzā – sent annual tributes of slaves to their eastern neighbour until the beginning of the nineteenth century.[289] Some authors consider therefore the Bayajidda legend as a Bornu taxlist.[290] In view of the primordial subordination of the Hausa states to Kanem-Bornu it would in fact appear that the Chadic state stood since ancient times in the centre of a regional system of security based on age-honoured tributary relationships. The system implied that, as long as the tributary obligations were fulfilled, peace was guaranteed and the slaving raids were directed against other people of the Central Sudan. On account of their basic economic and political functions, the nuclei of states first established in the Sahel in the form of fortified slave trading posts and garrisons could in this way easily spread further south and reach Yorubaland.

The Chadic state stood at the apex of the regional system of security for different ethnic groups. For a long time it had been itself submitted to a prestational

[286] Lange, "Hausa-Traditionen", 72; *id.*, "Dimension", 197.

[287] Palmer, *Memoirs*, III, 133.

[288] Anthropologists consider the Annā/Aznā or Maguzawa usually as pre-Islamic polytheists (Hogben/Kirk-Greene, *Emirates*, 222; Nicolas, *Dynamique*, 34-35; Smith, *Daura*, 32-33) but according to Hausa tradition they are descendants of Karbagari (Hogben/Kirk-Greene, *Emirates*, 148; Nicolas, *Dynamique*, 64-65, 349).

[289] 'Abd al-Qādir b. al-Mustafā, *Rawḍat al-afkār*, transl. Palmer, "Western Sudan", 265; Hogben/Kirk-Greene, *Emirates*, 149

[290] Sutton, "Less orthodox history", 196; similarly Smith, "Considerations", 336.

system of forwarding slaves to the north. Later in the early Islamic period, when the great powers of the north had vanished, it was able to replace the prestational system by an exchange system based on market principles. In the medieval period, Kanem-Bornu further outgrew its former suzerains in the north by establishing settlement colonies in Kawar and in Fezzan.[291] Thus it reversed the former situation of cultural and political dependency: indeed, in the twelfth and thirteenth century, security in the central Sahara was no longer assured by any northern power but by the Chadic state itself. Just as Carthage had once superseded its mother country Tyre, the Chadic kingdom had taken the political and cultural lead with respect to the successor polities of its earlier metropolitan state.

11. Appendix: Oral Version of the Bayajidda Legend

It might come as a surprise that despite long-term academic research on Hausa history, the following text is the first full oral version of the Bayajidda legend of Daura. Alasan Abdurrahman, the son of the Emir Abdurrahman dan Musa (1912-1966), dictated the text on the eve of the Gani festival 1995. The narrator was born in 1932 and died in early 1996. According to his own statement, he was asked by the late Emir Abdurrahman to collect all available information on the Bayajidda legend and to write it down. He had three main informants: his father Abdurrahman, the brother of Abdurrahman, the Wazirin Daura,[292] and the Galadima Sule, the brother of the present Emir Muhammadu Bashar. Having completed his research and being literate only in his native language, he wrote down the Bayajidda story in Hausa and gave the only copy to the Emir Abdurrahman. Since then he earned the reputation of being the official court historian of Daura. All the important visitors to the town were referred to him.[293]

Subsequent to the recording of the following oral account, Malam Alasan worked for several days with me on various aspects of the Bayajidda narrative and on related praise-songs and court ceremonies of Daura. The informant pointed out that because of its bearing on the palace only royals knew the story well, not commoners.[294] Unfortunately he did not pass on his knowledge of court history to any of his children nor to any other person.

[291] Martin, "Kanem", 19-21; Lange, *Diwān*, 67; Lange/Berthoud, "Qasaba", 31-32.

[292] Probably Wazirī Alasan (Muhammadu Bashar, Emir, FN 95, 53).

[293] I am grateful to Philip Shea and A. U. Dan Asabe both of the Abdullahi Bayero University, Kano. Philip Shea gave me precious advice and arranged the research in Daura. Dan Asabe introduced me to Malam Alasan and helped me with translations.

[294] FN 95, 3-4.

The earlier published versions of the Bayajidda narrative are mostly based on Arabic texts written down towards the end of the pre-colonial period by locally trained Muslim clerics. The best known and most widely used was translated by A. Walwyn and published by H. R. Palmer. Two other noteworthy written versions of the legend were translated by E. J. Arnett and Hassan and Shuaibu. Further, there is an Arabic text published in conjunction with a French translation by A. Salifou. Oral versions from various commoners are found in the writings of R. M. East, Abubakar Imam, G. Nicolas and F. Edgar.[295]

The Bayajidda narrative has been the object of various studies. The following are noteworthy: Barth, *Travels*, I, 471-472; Palmer, *Bornu Sahara*, 273-274; Hallam, "Bayajidda legend", 47-60; Hogben and Kirk-Greene, *Emirates*, 145-154; Smith, "Formation of states in Hausaland", 329-346; Smith, "Beginnings", Smith, "Bayajidda and Magajiya", in id.: *Affairs of Daura*, 52-57, Lange, "Pre-Islamic dimension of Hausa history", 162-173, 182-193, and *id.*, "Kanaanäisch-israelitisches Neujahrsfest", 112-160. None of these studies fully explore the deep roots of the story in Hausa society and its implications for the connection between the emergence of states in Hausaland and the trans-Saharan trade activities of the Phoenician city states of North Africa.[296]

Based on a transcription of the Hausa oral text, the following is a literal word for word translation. Even if sometimes a bit tortuous, it hopefully conveys some of the flavour of the oral account. Hesitations, sudden shifts of the mind, and repetitions are indicated by dots. Minor slips of the tongue have been omitted. I am grateful to Muhammad Munkaila from the University of Maiduguri for his transcription of the tape and for his assistance in the translation of the Hausa text into English. An earlier translation by Ibrahim Hamza provided useful cross-referencing. I hope at a later date to be able to provide a more elaborate exploration of the story in connection with the early history of Hausaland. The main purpose of this presentation is the rapid publication of the oral text that thus precludes in-depth interpretation.

[295] Abubakar Imam, *Hausa bakwai*; Arnett, "Hausa chronicle", 162-165; East, *Hausawa*, 1, 1-3; Edgar, *Litafi*, I, 222-225, 229-230; Hassan/Shuaibu, *Chronicle*, 1-3; Nicolas, *Dynamique*, 62-65; Palmer, *Memoirs*, III, 132-143; Salifou, *Damagaram*, 203-243.

[296] On the trans-Saharan trade in ancient times see Gsell, *Histoire*, IV, 138-140; Bovill, *Golden Trade*, 13-44; Mattingly, *Tripolitania*, 156-157; Lange, "Ursprung des Bösen", 3-8.

History of the people of Daura

The origin of the people of Daura was that they migrated from Palestine. The person who led the migration was Najib, the grand son of Canaan. They came to Egypt. From Egypt some of his relations stayed in Ethiopia. The others proceeded forward and came to Egypt where they stayed. They were disturbed by conflicts and unrest. Therefore they left Egypt and went to Libya. From Libya they split up; some of them went towards the Sudan. By the will of God, Daara was the one who led them to Kutugu, a place situated in the desert, very close to Timbuktu near Mali. From there they came to the town of Daara. When they left Daara they came to Kufai. From Kufai they went to another town called Rafa situated in the francophone country. At Rafa they split. Then Innagari, the grandmother of Duma of Gobir, led them. Then Kafara led them to *Tsohon Birni* "old city". Then after Kafara Yakano, then Yakaliya, then Kadanta, then Waiwaila, then Didigir, then Jiagari, then Wairama and then Daurama. At that time the women were ruling; men did farming and hunting.

Then Daurama according to history... that is to say the book of Girgam, she found that there was a certain place where her ancestors had settled. It was situated south of Daura. Then she went southward up to a place where she saw the snake. She said: "You should come, I saw that it was here that our ancestors settled".[297] At that time of the arrival of Daurama the Hausa language was the same as ours, however there were some differences. When they got used to the snake inside the well, ..they made him like a king. When they went to the rim of the well, this is what they used to sing:

"... *you ... covers, you ... mother sun ... the sun is high ... you ... covers, you... you...*".[298]

Then the thing in the well heard the song:

"... *covers, you... Here we came. Here we are waiting, it is already high noon, it is midday, we did not drink water yet*".

[297] The statement implies that the worship of the snake was thought to be the most distinctive element of the ancestral religion.

[298] Being very old, the words of the song are not understood by present Hausa-speakers. There are different variants of the ancient song (Alasan, Dakama, FN 95, 5, 60). A translation into present Hausa is likewise part of the repertoire of the Dakama (FN 95, 5). *Ki* "you" is feminine. It could apply to *macijiya* the feminine form of *maciji* "snake".

Thereafter the snake moved aside. It gave them water or rather, they fetched water. When the people had fetched water from the well… which was in the bush, they left. They would count one week before coming back. After a week they came back. Thus, from one week to another the snake became accustomed to that. So that was what was happening.

Then Abuyazidu,[299] the son of the king of Baghdad Abdullahi – he was the person referred to as Abuyazidu. When the Queen Zidam conquered Baghdad, the people separated into forty groups.[300] Abuyazidu led one of the groups comprising three hundred people and entered Nigeria from the direction of Lake Chad by the town of Ngala. It was from the name of Ngala that the title Galadima was derived.[301] He arrived at Borno at a time when it was not yet called Borno but rather Gazargamu. When he came to Gazargamu he met the people staying there with their king. When he realized that the king's people were few and that his own people were more numerous and stronger than those of the king of Borno he made up his mind to make a plot to have the king killed so that he became the ruler of Borno. However, the news of the plot reached the king of Borno: "Did you hear that the stranger who came is planning to kill you?" The king of Borno gathered his senior officials and they took a decision. It was decided that he should give him his daughter called Magaram in marriage.[302]

Consequently, when there was an outbreak of war he borrowed all the slaves of Abuyazidu. Whenever he conquered any town he ordered some of the slaves to stay in the town. This practice continued until Bayajidda[303] was left with only one slave and his wife. So they remained only three in number. Abuyazidu realized that what he formerly had planned against the king was now directed against him. That is all. Therefore he decided that in the night he himself, his slave and his wife would leave the town in order to proceed towards the west.

They arrived at a town called *Gabàs ta Biràm* "the east of Biram" situated at present in Hadeja and now called *Gàrùn Gabàs* "eastern wall". At Garun Gabas he realized that the king of Borno could easily get hold of him there. Therefore

[299] Later on also called Bayajidda.

[300] Perhaps a reference to the Babylonian conquest of Assyria in 612 BC or to the Persian conquest of Babylonia in 539 BC.

[301] Other versions of the narrative link the origin of the office of Galadima to the verification of the death of the snake at the well (Smith, *Daura*, 54).

[302] Other versions of the legend call the Bornoan wife by the name Magira, designating the office of the queen mother in Bornu (Arnett, "Hausa chronicle", 162; Palmer, *Memoirs*, III, 133; Salifou, *Damagaram*, 233; Smith, *Daura*, 54). The office corresponds to that of the Magajiya in Daura (Lange, "Amt der Königinmutter", 139-147).

[303] This is the only instance the name Bayajidda is mentioned. Elsewhere the hero is called Abuyazidu.

he sneaked out at night, leaving behind his wife and slave. He continued on his course further west until he reached Gaya. The present Abagiyawa people of Kano were originally from Gaya. They are blacksmiths. He drew out his 'knife' and said to them: "This is what I lost on my way and I would like you to produce for me its similar make". And they did what was requested from them to produce.[304] He headed northward into the wilderness without any destination in mind. This until God brought him to a certain place…He said to himself: "For sure, in this forest I will find a town". From there God brought him to Daura. He arrived at Daura in the night. He entered by the eastern gate. When he came, he cut a tree in order to climb into the town. He opened the gate…he had tied his horse outside the gate. Then he opened the gate, then he went back, pulled his horse and entered the town.

God in his power…when he arrived in the town, he went to a house which he believed belonged to a male person. But actually he entered into the house of an old woman. The woman was called Ayana. Her house is situated near the prison in Daura. When he saw the old woman, you will wonder how they could communicate.[305] In fact, they were all Arabs, although now we are all of us black people. He was addressing her saying: "I would like to have water. Please give it to me". She replied by saying: "No, my son, we in this town do not get water except on Fridays". He said to her: "I still ask you to give me water". He insisted she give him a bucket. She gave it to him. But he said: "Please show me the direction of the well". She said, "Look over there. Inside that thick forest there is a well". Being a brave man, Abuyazidu headed towards the bush where the well was situated. As soon as he reached the rim of the well, he continued holding his horse and looked into the well, to see what was inside, because Kusugu at that time was a hole of limited size. The water of Kusugu did not rise up like a spring. It came from different sides and where it met it went up and after some time dropped down.

When Abuyazidu looked into the well and saw the snake, he tied his horse, let the bucket down into the well. The snake held the bucket and pressed it down. Abuyazidu did not know how to fetch the water from the well, since Ayana had told him: "Even if I explain to you, how to get water from the well, you will not be able to apply this properly".[306] He remembered the word *kin saki* "you

[304] Probably Alhasan means here the sword of the hero and not his knife, since in the interview he specifically states that the hero brought the sword from Baghdad while the knife was produced by the Abagiyawa (Alhasan FN 95, 12). Bayajidda used the former to kill the snake and the latter to cut off its head (Alhasan FN 95, 11, 15).

[305] This rhetorical question is addressed to the interviewer.

[306] Later Alasan explained that the sacred song had to be sung on Friday and in a special way (FN 95, 61, 81).

Thereafter the snake moved aside. It gave them water or rather, they fetched water. When the people had fetched water from the well… which was in the bush, they left. They would count one week before coming back. After a week they came back. Thus, from one week to another the snake became accustomed to that. So that was what was happening.

Then Abuyazidu,[299] the son of the king of Baghdad Abdullahi – he was the person referred to as Abuyazidu. When the Queen Zidam conquered Baghdad, the people separated into forty groups.[300] Abuyazidu led one of the groups comprising three hundred people and entered Nigeria from the direction of Lake Chad by the town of Ngala. It was from the name of Ngala that the title Galadima was derived.[301] He arrived at Borno at a time when it was not yet called Borno but rather Gazargamu. When he came to Gazargamu he met the people staying there with their king. When he realized that the king's people were few and that his own people were more numerous and stronger than those of the king of Borno he made up his mind to make a plot to have the king killed so that he became the ruler of Borno. However, the news of the plot reached the king of Borno: "Did you hear that the stranger who came is planning to kill you?" The king of Borno gathered his senior officials and they took a decision. It was decided that he should give him his daughter called Magaram in marriage.[302]

Consequently, when there was an outbreak of war he borrowed all the slaves of Abuyazidu. Whenever he conquered any town he ordered some of the slaves to stay in the town. This practice continued until Bayajidda[303] was left with only one slave and his wife. So they remained only three in number. Abuyazidu realized that what he formerly had planned against the king was now directed against him. That is all. Therefore he decided that in the night he himself, his slave and his wife would leave the town in order to proceed towards the west.

They arrived at a town called *Gabàs ta Biràm* "the east of Biram" situated at present in Hadeja and now called *Gàrùn Gabàs* "eastern wall". At Garun Gabas he realized that the king of Borno could easily get hold of him there. Therefore

[299] Later on also called Bayajidda.

[300] Perhaps a reference to the Babylonian conquest of Assyria in 612 BC or to the Persian conquest of Babylonia in 539 BC.

[301] Other versions of the narrative link the origin of the office of Galadima to the verification of the death of the snake at the well (Smith, *Daura*, 54).

[302] Other versions of the legend call the Bornoan wife by the name Magira, designating the office of the queen mother in Bornu (Arnett, "Hausa chronicle", 162; Palmer, *Memoirs*, III, 133; Salifou, *Damagaram*, 233; Smith, *Daura*, 54). The office corresponds to that of the Magajiya in Daura (Lange, "Amt der Königinmutter", 139-147).

[303] This is the only instance the name Bayajidda is mentioned. Elsewhere the hero is called Abuyazidu.

he sneaked out at night, leaving behind his wife and slave. He continued on his course further west until he reached Gaya. The present Abagiyawa people of Kano were originally from Gaya. They are blacksmiths. He drew out his 'knife' and said to them: "This is what I lost on my way and I would like you to produce for me its similar make". And they did what was requested from them to produce.[304] He headed northward into the wilderness without any destination in mind. This until God brought him to a certain place…He said to himself: "For sure, in this forest I will find a town". From there God brought him to Daura. He arrived at Daura in the night. He entered by the eastern gate. When he came, he cut a tree in order to climb into the town. He opened the gate…he had tied his horse outside the gate. Then he opened the gate, then he went back, pulled his horse and entered the town.

God in his power…when he arrived in the town, he went to a house which he believed belonged to a male person. But actually he entered into the house of an old woman. The woman was called Ayana. Her house is situated near the prison in Daura. When he saw the old woman, you will wonder how they could communicate.[305] In fact, they were all Arabs, although now we are all of us black people. He was addressing her saying: "I would like to have water. Please give it to me". She replied by saying: "No, my son, we in this town do not get water except on Fridays". He said to her: "I still ask you to give me water". He insisted she give him a bucket. She gave it to him. But he said: "Please show me the direction of the well". She said: "Look over there. Inside that thick forest there is a well". Being a brave man, Abuyazidu headed towards the bush where the well was situated. As soon as he reached the rim of the well, he continued holding his horse and looked into the well, to see what was inside, because Kusugu at that time was a hole of limited size. The water of Kusugu did not rise up like a spring. It came from different sides and where it met it went up and after some time dropped down.

When Abuyazidu looked into the well and saw the snake, he tied his horse, let the bucket down into the well. The snake held the bucket and pressed it down. Abuyazidu did not know how to fetch the water from the well, since Ayana had told him: "Even if I explain to you, how to get water from the well, you will not be able to apply this properly".[306] He remembered the word *kin saki* "you

[304] Probably Alhasan means here the sword of the hero and not his knife, since in the interview he specifically states that the hero brought the sword from Baghdad while the knife was produced by the Abagiyawa (Alhasan I-N 95, 12). Bayajidda used the former to kill the snake and the latter to cut off its head (Alhasan I-N 95, 11, 15).

[305] This rhetorical question is addressed to the interviewer.

[306] Later Alasan explained that the sacred song had to be sung on Friday and in a special way (I-N 95, 61, 81).

release".[307] Therefore he said: "You release". Thereupon, the snake released the bucket and he pulled up the bucket with the water. He drank and gave water to his horse. Then he put the... bucket back into the well. He took his sword, waiting for the snake to come out. The snake took hold of the bucket. By pulling out the bucket, he also pulled out the snake. Allah gave him success and with his sword he cut half of the snake's head. The snake fell back on one side. He followed it and cut off the remainder of the head. He put the head of the snake inside his bag and went back to the house of Ayana, the old woman. He gave her water, she drank and wondered about what had happened between him and the snake.[308]

Early in the morning when the people came out, they knew that if the snake was out, it would cause havoc. Because of that the news started spreading that: "Today Sarki is out [of the well][309] although today is not the normal day of his appearance". Finally the news reached Daurama. Then Daurama said: "Let us get ready as we used to. Let us go and beg him".[310] Daurama instructed an announcement to be made that the people should come out towards the snake. There is a certain drum called Dajinjin (*dājinjin*). As soon as they heard this drum, they knew that they should go to the rim of the well. The Dajinjin is now at the palace. Right now the Dajinjin is at the palace of Daura. It is the instrument they beat at the night preceding the Gani festival. (If you come tonight you can find women playing it for the king.)[311] They are singing the song of the well for him, the song that used to be sung for the snake that was killed:

"King, we praise thee, we thank thee, we pay homage to thee.
Bull, you are very strong, your power supersedes that of all others.
King, he was generous to you, he passed away".[312]

[307] *Kin* is a feminine form indicating that the snake was thought to be female. Note that *Dōdo*, the name of the monster of Kusugu (Barth, *Reisen*, II, 81 n), has the feminine form *Dōdanniyá* (see Palmer, *Memoirs*, III, 136).

[308] By killing the snake Bayajidda – and hence his incarnation – the king is said to have inherited the power of the snake (Alasan FN 95, 4, 23, 54-55).

[309] *Sarki* in Hausa means "king". Above, the snake is said to have been made by the people "like a king".

[310] The "begging" in this instance is not for the access to water but it involves performances to appease the snake so that it will go back into the well without causing damage.

[311] This sentence is not part of the story, since the narrator here addresses the interviewer.

[312] Literally: "He ran away". The normal expression would have been *yá kauni* "he migrated, he died".

That song was originally sung in praise of Abuyazidu. It was this song which was turned into the praise song of the Daura royals. That makes it such as if, when they sing it, the snake is present, although actually everybody knows that the snake was killed.

When [the inhabitants of Daura] arrived with Daurama, they stayed at a distance since nobody dared to go near to the mouth of the well. However, one person called Audu Indi was the one who cautiously moved forward until he reached the rim of the well. He looked closely at the snake. Then he came and told Daurama the news: "Today the killer has been killed for us, he passed away (*kaurā*)". [Daurama asked:] "He passed away? You are Kaura". That is the reason why [the title] Kaura spread in Hausaland.[313] Therefore, if you see a hero, he is called Kaura.[314]

After the people had come and surrounded the place, Daurama said: "An announcement should be made that, whoever killed the snake, I will divide the land into two and give him half of it. We will rule together". So, there and then having all gathered, one cut and brought a head, another tried to match it, yet another cut and brought another head. Finally, when the old lady Ayana had got the news, she came to the place of Daurama, she knelt down and greeted her. Then she said: "Yesterday I had an outstanding visitor, who even gave me water to drink". Daurama said to her: "Alright, you should go and call him". Ayana went and met him. She said: "Alright my son, you should go to the well, Daurama is looking for you". He came. Daurama said: "The old lady claimed that you killed the snake". Abuyazidu said: "I am the one who killed it". [Daurama said]: "Alright, if you have the head bring it out". He put his hand inside his bag and he brought out the head of the snake. Someone tried and it matched exactly the head of the snake.

Abuyazidu said: "I heard that you promised that whoever killed the snake, you would give him half of the land. Alright, I do not want half of the land, I want to marry you". At that time queens did not get married. Whoever was a queen she should not know a man. Alright, Daurama considered what the man had done, all the things he had accomplished with respect to the snake. She said that she agreed to marry him. Then they tied the marriage. Daurama said: "However, you will not be able to consummate the marriage with me. It is only once I remove the obstacle between us that you will be able to consummate the marriage.[315] Meanwhile let me give you a slave with whom you can stay". She offered them

[313] Other versions mention the two senior eunuch officials of Daura, Galadima and Kaura. The first was not courageous enough to reach the well (Smith, *Daura*, 54).

[314] As a result of Islamic influences, Kaura in this sense tends now to be replaced by the name Ali in remembrance of Ali b. Abi Talib.

[315] According to Smith "the queen apparently refused to consummate the union, though Bayajidda lived in her home" (*Daura*, 54).

a place where they could stay inside the palace, he and the slave Bagwariya that she gave to him.

They stayed together until God gave her pregnancy. Then she gave birth to a male child. She got the permission of her husband to give the name to the child. She said: "He should be called Karap da Gari". It means: 'He snatched the town'.[316] Then Daurama became worried [because of the child and his name]. Finally, by the power of God, Daurama also became pregnant. Nobody knew what the sex of the child would be. She prayed and God helped her to give birth to a male child. She too requested for the permission [to give the name to her child]. She said: "Since that one got the permission…, it would be more appropriate to give it to me. Since that one was called Karap da Gari meaning 'snatcher of the town', mine should have the name Bawo meaning 'he should give it back to the rightful owners'." That is why the name of her child is Bawo 'give it back'.[317]

Alright, when Abuyazidu died and Daurama also died, people said that Bawo, being the son of Magajiya Daurama, should succeed his mother. He was the first male child [and male king] and the tenth by counting because his mother was the ninth. That means that he was the first male [on the throne of Daura] and became the tenth [ruler].[318] But the counting starts from him up to the present king of Daura.

After Bawo had become the ruler he said: "This son of Bagwariya, you are the son of a slave, the son of the slave of my mother". Because of that he made him an errant-magician. He said to him: "Well, what I want from you at a certain time…". He, Bawo gave birth to these children… Bawo…He said to him: "Well, you keep on being an errant-magician for me". Thus he turned him into a Bamaguje. Hence he said to him: "You will keep on doing all the things the Maguzawa are doing".[319] That was the actual origin of Maguzanci.[320] "All the

[316] *Karap* can be considered as an ideophone of *karbé* "snatch, take over". The name implies that Bagwariya giving the name *Karap dà Gàri* "overtaker" to her son expects him to be the future ruler.

[317] The name Bawo implies the restitution of the town as well as the rulership. *Báwó* is composed of *bá* "give" and *ó* – in this case *wó* – the ventive particle indicating the movement towards the speaker. It means "give back to me" or "return to me".

[318] In the interview, Alasan also made it clear that Abuyazidu was only the royal husband and not the real ruler of Daura (FN 95, 16).

[319] Bawo addresses Karap da Gari in the plural form (*kù*) thus indicating that his descendants should likewise be Maguzawa.

[320] The Maguzawa, sing. Bamaguje, are a section of the Hausa society equivalent to the Azna or Arna (Alhasan FN 95, 48; Kunkumi FN 00, 18-20). On account of their affiliation to the deities of the netherworld they are often considered to be pagan. Indeed, contrary to the Hausa section of the society they are more resistant to Islamic monotheism. Their specific cult practice is called *Maguzanci* (Bargery, *Dictionary*, 746).

superstitions which are to be performed, you are the one to do them. I am the one who rules, but the rituals, you are the one to do them".[321]

So, when the time went on Bawo inherited him.[322] Later on, Bawo gave birth to six sons: Daura, Kano, Katsina, Gobir, Rano, [Zazzau/Zaria], the seventh being Gabas-ta-Biram. At that place Abuyazidu left his son.[323] If you count, you will find out that there are six Hausa, while the seventh is Gabas-ta-Biram. As for the son of Bagwariya, Karap da Gari, he established Jukunawa, the Kwararrafawa people, the people of Kebbi, Igala. All the people around this region are called *Banza bakwai* "seven Banza" and *Hausa bakwai* "seven Hausa".[324]

From Bawo to the present king of Daura there are altogether ninety-five kings. However in the book of Girgam and owing to the loss of history they became fifty…in fact, fifty-eight kings. The Fulani had nine kings following the ousting of the Habe during the *Jihad* of Usman dan Fodio. He sent Isiaku with a flag. The latter stayed at Godai which is situated west of Daura at a distance of one and a half miles. They settled there and kept on praying to God. There was a famine of eleven years. At that time, Sarkin Gwari Audu left Daura. After having left Daura, he headed towards Maiaduwar Kadai. From there to Kandanka, then to Jere, from there he went to Dawambai. At Dawambai Kaura, son of Dawambai, said: "We should go to that tree. He said: 'When we go, who will do for us…'.[325] He said: 'We should make an announcement (*yèkuwà*), so that our kinsmen come and join us." Yekuwa is now a town with a king. It is there that Sarkin Gwari died. His younger brother Ibrahim went and founded Birnin Gwari.[326] When Sarkin Gwari came here [to Daura], we took him to the grave of Sarkin Gwari Audu. When they were at Yekuna, they decided to leave the foot of the mountain and to go back to Daura. That is why they came to Yardaje, where they stayed. From there his younger brother Kitari went and founded Magaria. Danficini went and established Baure. Usman established Toka. Muhammadu established

[321] Similarly, Gobir traditions link the non-territorial power of Sarkin Anna to the heritage of Karbagari (Nicolas, *Dynamique*, 64).

[322] Although the narrator uses here the masculine pronoun referring apparently to Bayajidda, he probably intended to make Bawo the inheritor of his mother. The evidence for this is provided by the earlier statement that Bawo was the first male king after nine queens.

[323] By defining Gabas-ta-Biram "Gabas/east of Biram" as a locality, the narrator makes it clear that the other names likewise refer to towns and not to sons.

[324] Although the narrator mixes here the *Banza bakwai* with the *Hausa bakwai*, the preceding statement makes it clear that in his mind they are two distinct entities.

[325] Perhaps the narrator wanted to refer here to the ritual of the well. At that time any important meeting – called upon by the *kàlangù* drums – had perhaps to take place at the well (see Smith, *Daura*, 303).

[326] Other authorities do not mention any link between Daura and Birnin Gwari.

Macina now in francophone territory. Alright, after some time Sarkin Gwari Audu died. Then Lukuli took over from him. After Lukuli took over from him there was Nuhu. Lukuli is the one who came to *Tsôhôn Kafi* of Zango.[327] Lukuli said: "I established Kafi of Zango". However, he did not complete the foundation before he died. When Lukuli died, he was followed by Nuhu. When Nuhu inherited him, he said: "Well, my father established Tsohon Kafi". He is the one who came to Tsohon Kafi na Zango. He said: "That Zango is a camp on our way to Daura". That means that we stayed here before we went to Daura. Their ousting from Daura lasted for ninety-nine years before they came back to the town. After Nuhu came Tafida, then Haruna, then Suleiman, then Tafida who was the father of Malam Musa. It is Malam Musa who came to Daura in nineteen hundred...[328]

Alright, at that time the Fulani were ruling. Murnai was the king. When the Europeans asked him about the history of Daura, he said: "I do not have it. Those who have it, they are there to the east". That is why Malam Musa was brought from Zango to Daura. He gave the history of Daura as it really was. It was said: "Alright, this town is yours! You, this is not yours, this is not your town!"[329] Malam Musa was given the rulership of Daura, Maiaduwa and Sandamu and all the places where the Fulani were ruling: Maiaduwa, Sandawa, Daura they were all merged and placed under the authority of Malam Musa. The Europeans confirmed that they gave [those areas] to him. Then after Malam Musa established the kingdom of Daura, it was said that Zango should be merged to it. The king of Daura was put in charge of all those areas.[330]

After Malam Musa returned in the year one thousand and nine hundred and...he returned for seven years...he reigned for eleven years. After his death, Abdurrahman was turbaned in the year 1911. Abdurrahman died in 1966.[331] Then Alhaji Muhammad Bashar inherited the kingship of Daura.

My name is Alhaji Alasan Abdurrahman, the son of the late king of Daura Abdurrahman.

---

[327] *Zangô* is a camping place of travellers and caravans and as such it is not thought of as a permanent settlement.

[328] The restoration of the Hausa kings took place in 1906 (Hogben/Kirk-Greene, *Emirates*, 153; Smith, *Daura*, 419).

[329] By this statement the narrator repeats the verbal command supposedly given by the British colonial authorities to the conflicting parties.

[330] For the political history of Daura from the ousting of the Hausa kings by the Fulani jihadists in 1805 to their re-establishment by the British in 1906 see Hogben/Kirk-Greene, *Emirates*, 151-155, and Smith, *Daura*, 143-331.

[331] According to Hogben/Kirk-Greene, Abdurrahman was the 58th ruler of Daura (*Emirates*, 153). For an account of his rule from 1911 to 1966 see Smith (*Daura*, 461-462).

Bibliography

Abbreviations:

ABD: D. N. Freedman (ed.), *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, 6 vols., New York 1992.

ANRW: H. Temporini and W. Haase (eds.), *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt*, Berlin 1972 sq.

BHHW: B. Reicke and L. Rost (eds.), *Biblisch-Historisches Handwörterbuch*, 4 vols., Gottingen 1962-1979.

CAD: I. J. Gelb *et al.* (eds.), *The Assyrian Dictionary of the University of Chicago*, 21 vols., 1956-1999.

DCPP: E. Lipinski (ed.), *Dictionnaire de la civilisation phénicienne et punique*, Brepols 1992.

EI¹: M. Th. Houtsma *et al.* (eds.), *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 8 vols. Leiden 1913-1936.

EI²: B. Lewis *et al.* (eds.), *Encyclopédie de l'Islam*, 11 vols., Leiden 1960-2002 (from vol. I to V in French, from vol. VI to XI in English).

FN 95, 97, 00, 01, 02: Field notes D. Lange from the years 1995, 1997, 2000, 2001, 2002.

HAL: L. Kochler et al., *Hebräisches und aramäisches Lexikon*, 5 vols., Leiden 1967-1996.

KTU: M. Dietrich *et al.* (eds.), *The Cuneiform Alphabetic Texts from Ugarit, Ras Ibn Hani and Other Places*, 2nd ed., Munster 1995.

RES: *Répertoire d'Épigraphie Semitique*, vols. V-VIII, Paris 1929-1968.

RLA: E. Ebeling and B. Meissner (eds.), *Reallexikon der Assyriologie*, 9 vols. 1932-2001 (in progress).

TUAT: O. Kaiser (ed.), *Texte aus der Umwelt des Alten Testaments*, 3 vols., Güterloh 1981-1997.

Articles and books:

Abraham, R. C., *Dictionary of the Hausa Language*, 2nd ed., London 1962.

Abubakar Imam, *Hausa baḳwai: Kunne na garma ɓaka*, Zaria 1954.

Adamu, M., "The Hausa and their neighbours in the Central Sudan", in: D. T. Niane (ed.), *General History of Africa*, vol. IV, London 1984, 266-300.

Ameling, W., *Karthago*, Munich 1993.

Arnett, E. J., "A Hausa chronicle", *Journal of the African Society* 9 (1910), 161-167.

Astour, M. C., "841 B.C.: The first Assyrian invasion of Israel", *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 91 (1971), 383-389.

Attridge, H. W. and R. A. Oden, *Philo of Byblos: The Phoenician History*, Washington 1981.

Austen, R., "Mediterranean Islamic slave trade out of Africa: A tentative census", *Slavery and Abolition* 13 (1992), 214-248.
Bader, Ch., *Les Yibro – mages somali: les juifs oubliés de la corne de l'Afrique*, Paris 2000.
Bang, M., "Die Herkunft der römischen Sklaven", *Römische Mitteilungen* 25 (1910), 223-251.
Bargery, G. P., *A Hausa Dictionary*, London 1934.
Barth, H., *Travels and Discoveries in North and Central Africa*, 3 vols., New York 1857-1859.
Baumann, H. et al., *Völkerkunde von Afrika*, Essen 1940.
Beeston, A., "Vorislamische Inschriften und vorislamische Sprachen des Jemen", *in:* Daum (ed.), *Jemen*, 102-106.
– et al., *Sabaic Dictionary*, Louvain-la-Neuve 1982.
Besmer, F. E., *Horses, Musicians and Gods: The Hausa Cult of Possession-Trance*, South Hadley, Mass., 1983.
Bovill, E. W., *The Golden Trade of the Moors*, 2nd ed., London 1968.
Boyd, J., "Sallah in Gobir", *West Africa*, March 1977, 593-594.
Bulliet, R. W., *The Camel and the Wheel*, Cambridge, Mass., 1975.
Caskel, W., "Die alten semitischen Gottheiten in Arabien", *in:* S. Moscati (ed.), *Le antiche divinità semitiche*, Rome 1958, 95-117.
Casson, L., *The Periplus Maris Erythraei*, Princeton 1989.
Cerulli, E., "Un gruppo Mahrī nella Somalia Italiana", *Rivista degli studi orientali* 11 (1926-1928), 25-26.
Comte, E., *Marriage Patterns, Political Change and the Perpetuation of Social Inequality in South Kanem (Chad)*, Paris 1983.
Crone, P. and M. Cook, *Hagarism: the Making of the Islamic World*, Cambridge 1977.
Culican, W., "Phoenicia and Phoenician colonization", *in:* J. Boardman et al. (eds.), *Cambridge Ancient History*, vol. III, 2, Cambridge 1991, 461-546.
Cunchillos, J.-L., *La trouvaille épigraphique de l'Ougarit. 2. Bibliographie*, Paris 1990.
Cuoq, J., *Histoire de l'islamisation de l'Afrique de l'Ouest*, Paris 1984.
Daget, S. and F. Renault, *Les traites négrières en Afrique*, Paris 1985.
Daum, W., *Ursemitische Religion*, Stuttgart 1985.
– (ed.), *Jemen. 3000 Jahre Kunst und Kultur des glücklichen Arabien*, Innsbruck 1987.
Day, J., *God's Conflict with the Dragon and the Sea*, Cambridge 1985.
– *Yahweh and the Gods and Goddesses of Canaan*, Sheffield 2002.
Demougeot, E., "Le chameau et l'Afrique du Nord romaine", *Annales ESC* 15 (1960), 209-247.
Denham, D., H. Clapperton and W. Oudney, *Narrative of Travels and Discoveries*, 3 vols. 1826.
Desanges, J., "L'iconographie du Noir dans l'Afrique du Nord antique", *in:* J. Vercoutter (ed.), *L'image du Noir dans l'art occidental*, Fribourg 1976, 246-268.

– *Recherches sur l'actinité des Méditerranéens aux confins de l'Afrique*, Rome 1978.
Dittmer, K., "Afrika südlich der Sahara", *in:* K. Dittmer et al., *Saeculum Weltgeschichte*, vol. IV, Freiburg 1967, 585-635.
Donner, H., *Geschichte des Volkes Israel und seiner Nachbarn*, 2 vols., 2nd ed., Göttingen 1995.
Dozy, R., *Die Israelten zu Mekka*, Leipzig 1864.
Drake-Brockman, R. E., *British Somaliland*, London 1912.
Drexel, A., "Bornu und Sumer", *Anthropos* 14/15 (1919-1920), 215-294.
East, R. M., *Hausawa da makwabtansu, 2 vols., Zaria 1933.*
Échard, N., *Gentes d'un culte de possession hausa de l'Ader et du Kurfey (Niger)*, Paris, typographed, 1989.
Edgar, F., *Littafi na tatsuniyoyi na Hausa*, 3 vols., Belfast 1913.
Ellis, A. B., *The Yoruba-Speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast of West Africa*, London 1894.
Eph'al, I., *The Ancient Arabs*, Jerusalem 1984.
Fabunmi, M. A., *Ife Shrines*, Ife 1969.
– *Ife, the Genesis of Yoruba Race*, Lagos 1985.
Fage, J. D., *A History of Africa*, London 1978.
Fahd, T., *Le panthéon de l'Arabie centrale à la veille de l'hégire*, Paris 1968.
Firestone, R., *Journeys in Holy Lands: the Evolution of the Abraham-Ishmael Legends in Islamic Exegesis*, Albany 1990.
Fisher, H. J., *Slavery in the History of Muslim Black Africa*, London 2001.
Frankfort, H., *Kingship and the Gods. A Study of Ancient Near Eastern Religion as the Integration of Society and Nature*, Chicago 1948.
Freeman-Grenville, G., *The East African Coast. Select Documents from the First to the Earlier Nineteenth Century*, London 1975.
Frobenius, L., *Und Afrika sprach*, Berlin 1912.
– *Atlantische Götterlehre (Volksmärchen und Volksdichtungen Afrikas. Atlantis, X)*, Jena 1926.
Fuglestad, F., "A reconsideration of Hausa history before the Jihad", *Journal of African History* 19 (1978), 319-339.
Garbini, G., "Il dio sabeo Almaqah", *Rivista degli studi orientali* 48 (1973-1974), 15-22.
Gaster, Th. H., *Festivals of the Jewish Year*, New York 1952.
Gaudefroy-Demombynes, M., *Le pèlerinage de la Mekke*, Paris 1923.
George U. and H. Ziegert, "Die vergessene Zitadelle der Christen - Djado", *Geo* 9 (1992), 157-182.
Gray, R., "Christian traces and a Franciscan mission in the Central Sudan", *Journal of African History* 8 (1967), 383-393.
Greenberg, J., *Influence of Islam on a Sudanese Religion*, Seattle 1946.
Grimme, H., "Der südarabische Levitismus und sein Verhältnis zum Levitismus in Israel", *Le Muséon. Revue des études orientales* 37 (1924), 169-199.
Groom, N., *Frankincense and Myrrh: A Study of the Arabian Incense Trade*, London 1981.
Gsell, S., *Histoire ancienne de l'Afrique du Nord*, 8 vols., Paris 1913-1928.

Hallam, W., "The Bayajidda legend in Hausa folklore", *Journal of African History* 7 (1966), 47-60.
Harris, P. G., *Sokoto Provincial Gazetteer*, typographed, Sokoto 1938.
Hassan, M. and A. Shuaibu, *A Chronicle of Abuja*, Lagos 1962.
Haussig, H. W. (ed.), *Wörterbuch der Mythologie*, vol. I, Stuttgart, 1965.
Hess, J., *L'âme nègre*, Paris 1898.
Hiskett, M., *The Development of Islam in West Africa*, London 1984.
- *The Course of Islam in Africa*, Edinburgh 1994.
Hodgkin, Th., *Nigerian Perspectives*, London 1975.
Höfner, M., "Die Stammesgruppen Nord- und Zentralarabiens in vorislamischer Zeit", "Südarabien", *in:* Haussig, *Wörterbuch*, 407-481, 485-552.
- "Die vorislamischen Religionen Südarabiens", *in:* H. Gese *et al.* (eds.), *Die Religionen Altsyriens, Altarabiens und der Mandäer*, Stuttgart 1970, 234-402.
Hogben, S. J. and A. Kirk-Greene, *The Emirates of Northern Nigeria*, London 1966.
Huß, W., *Geschichte der Karthager*, Wiesbaden 1985.
- "Die antike Mittelmeerwelt und Innerafrika bis zum Ende der Herrschaft der Karthager und der Ptolemaier", *in:* H. Duchardt *et al.* (eds.), *Afrika – Entdeckung und Erforschung eines Kontinents*, Cologne 1989, 1-29.
Idowu, E. B., *Olodumare: God in Yoruba Belief*, London 1962.
Jacobsen, T., *The Sumerian King List*, Chicago 1939.
Jäger, F., "Die Ursprungstradition von Kanem-Bornu in einer Perspektive der langen Dauer", *in:* H. Egbert *et al.* (eds.), *Afrika im Wandel*, Berlin 2001, 193-202.
Jaggar, P. J. "Kano city blacksmiths: pre-colonial distribution, structure and organization", *Savanna* 2 (1973), 11-25.
Jenkins, G. K. and R. B. Lewis, *Carthaginian Gold and Electrum Coins*, London 1963.
Johnson, S., *History of the Yorubas*, London 1921.
Johnston, H., *The Fulani Empire of Sokoto*, London 1967.
Keel, O., *Die Welt der altorientalischen Bildsymbolik und das Alte Testament am Beispiel der Psalmen*, 6th ed., Göttingen 1996.
Kisā'ī, *Kisas al-anbiyā'*, ed. I. Eisenberg, Leiden 1922; transl. W. M. Thackston, *The Tales of the Prophets of al-Kisā'ī*, Boston 1978.
Kitchen, K. A., *Documentation for Ancient Arabia. Part I: Chronological Framework*, Liverpool 1994.
Knauf, E. A., *Ismael. Untersuchungen zur Geschichte Palästinas und Nordarabiens im 1. Jahrtausend v. Chr.*, 2nd ed., Wiesbaden 1989.
Krecher, J., "Schreiberschulung in Ugarit: Die Tradition von Listen und sumerischen Texten", *Ugarit-Forschungen* 1 (1969), 131-158.
Krieger, K., *Geschichte von Zamfara*, Berlin 1959.
- "Weitere Bemerkungen zur Geschichte von Zamfara", *Baessler-Archiv* 12 (1964), 89-139.
- "Notizen zur Religion der Hausa", *Paideuma* 13 (1967), 96-120.

Kronenberg, A., *Die Teda von Tibesti*, Vienna 1958.
Kühme, W., *Das Königtum von Gobir: Götter, Priester, Feste einer sakralen Gesellschaft*, Hamburg 2003.
Landeroin, M.-A., "Du Tchad au Niger", *in:* J. Tilho, *Documents scientifiques de la mission Tilho (1906-1909)*, vol. II, Paris 1911, 309-539.
Lane, E. W., *Arabic-English Lexicon*, 8 vols., Edinburgh 1863-1893.
Lange, D., *Le Dīwān des sultans du Kānem-Bornū*, Wiesbaden 1977.
- "Progrès de l'Islam et changements politiques au Kānem du XIe au XIIIe siècle: un essai d'interprétation", *Journal of African History* 19 (1978), 495-513.
- "La région du lac Tchad d'après la Géographie d'Ibn Sa'id: texte et cartes", *Revue d'Islamologie*, 16 (1980), 149-181.
- "The kingdoms and peoples of Chad", *in:* D. T. Niane (ed.), *General History of Africa* (UNESCO), vol. IV, Paris 1984, 238-265.
- "Das Amt der Königinmutter im Tschadseegebiet: Historische Betrachtungen", *Paideuma* 36 (1990), 139-156.
- "Hausa-Traditionen in ihrer Abhängigkeit von Kanem-Borno und Nubien", *Anthropos* 88 (1993), 47-76.
- "Ethnogenesis from within the Chadic state. Some thoughts on the history of Kanem-Borno", *Paideuma* 39 (1993), 261-277.
- "Der Ursprung des westafrikanischen Wettergottes Schango", *Saeculum* 45 (1994), 213-238.
- "Links between West Africa and the Ancient Orient", *in:* H. Willer *et al.* (eds.), *Macht der Identität – Identität der Macht*, Münster 1995, 347-369.
- "The pre-Islamic dimension of Hausa history", *Saeculum* 46 (1995), 161-203.
- "Das hebräische Erbe der Yoruba: I. Ursprungssagen, Schöpfungsmythen und Festrituale", *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 147 (1997), 77-136.
- "Das kanaanäisch-israelitische Neujahrsfest der Hausa", *in:* M. Kropp and A. Wagner (eds.), *Schnittpunkt Ugarit*, Frankfurt/M 1999, 109-162.
- "Das hebräische Erbe der Yoruba. II: Israelitische Geschichte und kanaanäischer Kult", *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 149 (1999), 79-144.
- "Äthiopien im Kontext der semitischen Welt: die Königin von Saba als kanaanäische Liebesgöttin", *in:* H.-P. Hahn and G. Spittler (eds.), *Afrika und die Globalisierung*, Münster 1999, 269-277.
- "Jesus und das Auferstehungsfest der Yoruba", *in:* U. Engels *et al.* (eds.), *Afrika 2000, Leipzig 30. März bis 1. April 2000*, Münster, LIT, CD-ROM, 2000, 12 p.
- "Der Ursprung des Bösen: neue Evidenzen aus Afrika, Kanaan und Israel", *in:* W. H. Ritter und J. Schlumberger (eds.), *Das Böse in der Geschichte*, Dettelbach 2003, 1-27.

- "Preservation of Canaanite Creation Culture in Ife", *in:* P. Probst and G. Spittler (eds.), *Between Resistance and Expansion: Dimensions of Local Vitality in Africa*, Hamburg 2004, 127-157.
- "Die Gründung der Hausastaaten – ein Plädoyer für eine historische Ethnologie", *in:* K. Beck *et al.* (eds.), *Festschrift Gerd Spittler*, Cologne 2004, 28-39.
- "The Phoenician slave trade and the rise of states in the Central Sudan", *in:* F.-X. Fauvelle-Aymar et B. Hirsch (eds.), *Mélanges Jean Boulègue (in press)*.

Lange, D. and S. Berthoud, "Al-Qasaba et d'autres villes de la voie centrale du Sahara", *Paideuma* 23 (1977), 19-40.
Last, M., "Early Kano: The Santolo-Fangwai settlement system", *Kano Studies*, N.S. 1, 4 (1979), 7-23.
- "Historical metaphors in the Kano chronicle", *History in Africa* 7 (1980), 161-178.
- "The early kingdoms of the Nigerian Savanna", *in:* J. Ajayi und M. Crowder (eds.), *History of West Africa*, vol. I, 3rd ed., Harlow 1985, 167-224.

Laurence, M., *A Tree for Poverty: Somali Poetry and Prose*, Nairobi 1954.
Law, R., "The Garamantes and trans-Saharan enterprise in classical times", *Journal of African History 8 (1967), 181-200.*
- "The heritage of Oduduwa: Traditional history and political propaganda among the Yoruba", *Journal of African History* 14 (1973), 207-222.

Levtzion, N. and J. Hopkins, *Corpus of Early Arabic Sources for West African History*, Cambridge 1981.
Lewis, B., *The Sargon Legend*, Cambridge, Mass., 1980.
Lewis, I. M., *Peoples of the Horn of Africa*, London 1955.
- *Blood and Bone: The Call of Kinship in Somali Society*, Lawrenceville, NJ, 1994.

Lhote, H., *Les chars rupestres sahariens*, Toulouse 1982.
Lipinski, E., *Dieux et déesses de l'univers phénicien et punique*, Leuven 1995.
Lyon, G. F. , *A Narrative of Travels in Northern Africa*, London 1821.
Martin, B. G., "Kanem, Bornu, and the Fezzān: notes on the political history of a trade route", *Journal of African History* 10 (1969), 15-27.
Mattingly, D. J., *Tripolitania*, London 1995.
Markoe, G., *Phoenicians*, London 2000.
Martinetz, D. et al., *Weihrauch und Myrrhe: Kulturgeschichte und wirtschaftliche Bedeutung*, Berlin 1989.
Mattingly, D. J., *Tripolitania*, London 1995.
Mauny, R., *Tableau géographique de l'Ouest Africain au moyen-âge*, Dakar 1961.
- *Siècles obscurs de l'Afrique Noire*, Paris 1970.

Meillassoux, C., *Anthropology of Slavery: The Womb of Iron and Gold*, Chicago 1991.
Meissner, B., *Babylonien und Assyrien*, 2 vols., Heidelberg 1920-1925.
Mettinger, T. N. D., *The Riddle of Resurrection: "Dying and Rising Gods" in the Ancient Near East*, Stockholm 2001.

Meyer, E., *Die Israeliten und ihre Nachbarstamme*, Halle 1906.
Millar, R., "Hagar, Ishmael, Josephus and the origins of Islam", *Journal of Jewish Studies* 44 (1993), 23-45.
Mischlich, A. and J. Tappert, "Beiträge zur Geschichte der Hausastaaten", *Mitteilungen des Seminars fur Afrikanische Studien, III. Abt.* (1903), 137-242.
Mohamed Abdi, M., *Histoire des croyances en Somalie*, Paris 1992.
Moor, J. de, *New Year with Canaanites and Israelites*, 2 vols., Kampen 1972.
Moscati, S., *Die Phönizier*, Zurich 1966.
Moortgat, A., *Tammuz. Der Unsterblichkeitsglaube in der altorientalischen Bildkunst*, Berlin 1949.
Movers, F. K., *Die Phönizier*, 2 vols., Bonn 1841, Berlin 1856.
Munro-Haye, S., *Aksum. An African Civilisation of Late Antiquity*, Edinburgh 1991.
Müller, W. W., "Skizze der Geschichte Altsüdarabiens", *in:* Daum (ed.), *Jemen*, 50-56.
Nachtigal, G., *Sahara und Sudan*, 3 vols., Berlin 1879-1889.
Nicolas, G., *Dynamique sociale et apprehension du monde au sein d'une société hausa*, Paris 1975.
- "Fondements magico-religieux du pouvoir politique au sein de la principaute hausa du Gobir", *Journal de la Société des Africanistes* 39 (1969), 199-231.
- *La question du Gobir* (unpublished conference paper, Zaria 8.-18. Jan. 1979).

Nielsen, D., "Zur altarabischen Religion", *in:* D. Nielson (ed.), *Handbuch der altarabischen Altertumskunde*, vol. I, Copenhague 1927, 177-250.
Niemeyer, H. G., "Die frühe phönizische Expansion im Mittelmeer", *Saeculum* 50 (1999), 153-175.
Noth, M., *Geschichte Israels*, 3rd ed., Gottingen 1956.
Oliver, R. and J. D. Fage, *A Short History of Africa*, 6th ed., London 1988.
Olmo Lete, G. del, *Canaanite Religion According to the Liturgical Texts of Ugarit*, Bethesda 1999.
Orisatoyimbo, I. O. and B. Adediran, *The History and Traditions of Ancient Ifon Oroki Kingdom*, Ile-Ife 2000.
Paden, J. N., *Religion and Political Culture in Kano*, Berkeley 1973.
Palmer, H. R., "Western Sudan history: The Raudhāt al Afkārī", *Journal of the African Society*, 15 (1915-1916), 261-273.
- "History of Katsina", *Journal of the African Society* 26 (1926-27), 216-236.
- *Sudanese Memoirs*, 3 vols. Lagos 1928.
- *The Bornu Sahari and Sudan*, London 1936.

Parratt, J. K., "An approach to Ife festivals", *Nigeria Magazine* 100 (1969), 340-348.
Paulitschke, P., *Ethnographie Nordost-Afrikas*, 2 vols., Berlin 1893, 1896.
Pemberton, J. and F. S. Afolayan, *Yoruba Sacred Kingship: "A Power Like That of the Gods"*, Washington 1996.

Periplus maris Erythraei: see Casson, *Periplus*.
Phillipson, D. W., *Ancient Ethiopia*, London 1998.
Platte, E., *Frauen in Amt und Würden. Handlungsspielräume muslimischer Frauen im ländlichen Nordostnigeria*, Frankfurt/M. 2000.
Pliny, C. Secundi, *Naturalis historiae*, 37 vols. Vol. VI: ed. and transl. K. Brodersen, Zürich 1996.
Popovic, A., *La révolte des esclaves en Iraq au III^e/IX^e siècle*, Paris 1976.
Pritchard, J. B. (ed.), *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*, 3rd ed., Princeton 1969.
Ptolemy, *Geography* see Stevenson, *Claudius Ptolemy*.
Rathjens, C., *Die Juden Abessiniens*, Hamburg 1921.
Rohlfs, G., *Reise durch Nordafrika*, 2 vols., Gotha 1868, 1873.
– *Quer durch Afrika*, Leipzig 1874 (reed., Stuttgart 1984; transl. J. Debetz, *G. Rohlfs: Voyages et explorations*, vol. II, Paris 2001).
Ruprechtsberger, E. M., *Die Garamanten*, Mainz 1997.
Salifou, A., *Le Damagaram ou sultanat de Zinder*, Niamey 1971.
Schlee, G., *Identities on the Move: Clanship and Pastoralism in Northern Kenia*, Manchester 1989.
Schumacher, L., *Sklaverei in der Antike*, Munich 2001.
Slouschz, N, *Travels in North Africa*, Philadelphia 1927.
Smith, A., "Some considerations relating to the formation of states in Hausaland", *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria* 5 (1970), 329-346.
Smith, M. G., *Government in Zazzau*, London 1960.
– "The beginnings of Hausa society, A. D. 1000-1500", *in:* J. Vansina *et al.* (eds.), *The Historian in Tropical Africa*, London 1964, 339-357.
– *The Affairs of Daura: History and Change in a Hausa State, 1800-1958*, Berkeley 1978.
– *Government in Kano, 1350-1950*, Boulder 1997.
Smith, M. S., *The Origins of Biblical Monotheism*, Oxford 2001.
Snowden, F. M., *Blacks in Antiquity*, Cambridge, Mass., 1970.
Sölken, H., "Die Geschichte von Kabi nach Imam Umaru", *Mitteilungen des Instituts für Orientforschung* 7 (1959-1960), 123-162.
Stevens, Ph., "Orisha-nla festival", *Nigeria Magazine* 90 (1966), 184-199.
Stevenson, E. L., *Claudius Ptolemy, the Geography*, 2nd ed., New York 1991.
Sutton, J., "Towards a less orthodox history of Hausaland", *Journal of African History* 20 (1979), 179-201.
Tawil, H., "'Azazel the prince of the steppe: a comparative study", *Zeitschrift für Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 92 (1980), 43-59.
Temple, O. and C. L. Temple, *Notes on the Tribes of Northern Nigeria*, Lagos 1922.
Tha'alabī, *'Arāis al-majālis*, Cairo 1994.
Tremearne, A. J. N., *The Ban of Bori: Demons and Demon Dancing in West and North Africa*, London 1914.
Tromp, N. J., *Primitive Conceptions of Death and the Nether World in the Old Testament*, Rome 1969.

Ullendorff, E., *The Ethiopians. An Introduction to Country and People*, 3rd ed., London 1973.
"The Queen of Sheba in Ethiopian tradition", *in:* J. B. Pritchard (ed.), *Solomon and Sheba*, London 1974, 104-114.
Urvoy, Y., *Histoire des populations du Soudan central*, Paris 1936.
– *Historie de l'empire du Bornou*, Paris 1949.
Usman, Y. B., *The Transformation of Katsina: 1400-1883*, Zaria 1981.
Verger, P., "Ejigbo festival", *Nigeria Magazine* 70 (1970), 206-217.
Vikør, K. S., *Oasis of Salt: The History of Kawar, a Saharan Centre of Salt Production*, London 1999.
Weis, H., "Die Bornustrasse – der Weg ins Herz Afrikas", *in:* H. Schiffers (ed.), *Heinrich Barth: Ein Forscher in Afrika*, Wiesbaden 1967, 421-490.
Wellhausen, J., *Reste arabischen Heidentums*, Berlin 1887.
Westermann, D., *Geschichte Afrikas. Staatenbildungen südlich der Sahara*, Cologne 1952.
Winckler, H., *Arabisch-Semitisch-Orientalisch: Kulturgeschichtlich-mythologische Untersuchung*, Berlin 1901.
Wissmann, H. v., *Die Geschichte von Saba' II: Das Großreich der Sabäer bis zu seinem Ende im frühen 4. Jh. v. Chr.*, Vienna 1982.
Wolf, K. B., *Conquerors and Chroniclers of Early Medieval Spain*, Liverpool 1990.
Wyatt, N., *Religious Texts from Ugarit*, Sheffield 1998.
Zwi Werblowsky, R. J. and G. Wigoder (eds.), *The Oxford Dictionary of Jewish Religion*, Oxford 1997.

Ifẹ̀ and the Origin of the Yorùbá: Historiographical Considerations

Dierk Lange
Geschichte Afrikas
Universitat Bayreuth
95440 Bayreuth, Germany.

Among the peoples of Africa, the Yorùbá stand out as especially rich in testimonies of their past. In addition to the splendid works of art from Ifè, their traditional capital, their extensive mythical and historical traditions attracted the attention of European scholars from the beginning of the colonial period. Frobenius compared the richness of Yorùbá myths to that of the Egyptians, Baumann described the Yorùbá as the most outstanding people of 'Black Africa' with respect to their myths, and Mauny found Ifè to be the most important archaeological excavation site in Africa south of the Sahara[3]. It is thus not surprising that the history of the Yoruba soon became the subject of numerous speculations.

According to Yorùbá mythology, the holy town of Ifẹ̀, or Ilé-Ifẹ̀, located in the middle of their land, is the centre of the universe and the origin of all mankind. It was here that Odùdùwa created the primordial oceans and the earth, and it was from here that his sons are believed to have set out to found the other sixteen kingdoms of the Yorùbá. Even today, Ifẹ̀ is the home of the most respected Yorùbá king, and it is here that more festivals take place than in any other town. In fact, the people of Ifè claim that they celebrate at least one festival every day of the year. Furthermore, there are a number of stone monuments not normally found in most parts of tropical Africa, and it is from Ifẹ̀ that most of the well-known Yorùbá statues of kings and gods come. Hence it is not surprising that the Yorùbá take pride in considering Ifẹ̀ as the starting point of all their kingdoms and that they hold the town in honour as the profane centre of their religious universe.

But how is it possible to explain the remarkable cultural achievements associated with Ilé-Ifẹ̀ ('house'/'home' of Ifẹ̀)? Were they the result of early influences from the Mediterranean civilisations, as Frobenius believed, or from Egypt, or even from the Near East, as some authors assumed? These questions, which gave rise to heated debate in the past, are today no longer taken into account. The reason for this could perhaps be found in the distinct break in African historiography, which was more radical with respect to the Yorùbá than it was with respect to other peoples. Whereas Africanist researchers in colonial times turned their attention mainly towards the advanced civilisations of the North, supposing that all cultural impetus, which led to the foundation of states and cultural development in 'Black Africa', must have spread from there, the postcolonial scholars, moved by the optimism of the early years of political independence, were fascinated by the prospect of disclosing the internal factors of development. Consequently, the postcolonial generation of Africanist historians rejected

the concept of long-distance migrations of people coming from beyond the Sahara - the so-called Hamitic hypothesis - only admitting that people from the immediate vicinity might have introduced new ideas and new technologies. Both African and European researchers believed themselves to be more realistic than their predecessors by shortening the chronologies and limiting their inquiries to the interactions within a given society; at most, they also considered the influence of neighbouring people. To the scholars of this generation, only the stimuli engendered by long-distance trade were acceptable as foreign incentives for progress, but more often they assumed that the important cultural achievements were the result of internal developments owing nothing to the outside world. Indeed, for the history of many African peoples, paradigms were changed, but nowhere else was the research agenda so dramatically redefined as for the Yorùbá.

The Atlantis theory of Frobenius

At the beginning of this century, Leo Frobenius made a lasting impression on Yorùbá research. Following field trips to the Congo, as well as to West and North Africa, the ethnologist visited Yorùbáland in 1910, where he spent three months including three weeks in Ifè. There, his attention was mainly attracted by the Olókun grove, where he unearthed a bronze head of Olókun, the sea goddess, as well as seven terracotta heads. Furthermore, he meticulously recorded different versions of the Yorùbá myth of origin and described the court ceremonies and the palace of the king. On the other hand, he took little note of the many sacred festivals and mentioned the existence of temples and shrines only in connection with the objects he had found there. Upon his return to Germany, Frobenius claimed to have discovered the legendary Atlantis (Frobenius 1912a:323-351; id.: 1912b:347-375). He believed that, through his research, he had proven the historicity of the tales recorded by Plato concerning the powerful island city outside of the pillars of Hercules, which had sunk into the sea after a war against the Athenians (Plato 1922:35-42, 198-211). Although this claim was quite appealing to the general public, it was in the end very detrimental to the reputation of the ethnologist, since scholars began to suspect that the results of all his field research and his cultural-historical considerations were as dubious as his Atlantis theory (Becker 1913:303-312).

If one scrutinizes the evidence which Frobenius uses to support his thesis, one realises that there are a number of elements which can be interpreted as pointers to cultural influences from the Mediterranean world dating from the pre-Indo-European period. First of all, he notes the idea of the templum, a conception of the world divided into four cardinal directions, each subdivided again into four parts, which yields finally a sixteen-fold organisation. This structure is particularly apparent in the *Ifá* oracle, but it also seems to be reflected in the bureaucratic system, in the geographic subdivisions of the town of Ifę̀, and in the divine cosmos. Second, he points out the distinctive impluvial architecture, remarkable for its opening in the middle section of the house which allows in light as well as rain, which is then collected and stored in large water pots. Third, he observes that certain motifs perceived in the Ifę̀ terracottas and bronze sculptures can also be found in old Mediterranean cultures. In particular, the so-called

Olókun head bears a remarkable resemblace to Sardinian terracotta masks (Frobenius 1912a:314-5), which have been unearthed in almost the same form in Carthage (Lipinski 1992:276). On the basis of these and other parallels, Frobenius draws the conclusion that the Yorùbá were deeply influenced by pre-classical Mediterranean culture.

It is with these sober comparisons that Frobenius attempts to prove the existence of a West African Atlantic culture, whose carriers migrated from across the seas. Given the fact that even the Carthaginian seafarer, Hanno did not know of the Yorùbá culture area at the time of his alleged journey in the 5th century BC , Frobenius concluded that contact between the Mediterranean and this West-Atlantic colony had broken down well before the Carthaginian expansion. Since, on the other hand, the cultural comparisons point to parallels with Etruscans and ancient Sardinians, he tries to construct a connection with the Sea of People of the 13th century BC. in which he sees representatives of a western Mediterranean culture. He supposes that carriers of the 'West Culture' had migrated to the Atlantic coast of West Africa where they founded Atlantis even before the Turšha (Etruscans) attacked Egypt (Frobenius 1912a:348). Frobenius thus confused things which simply had nothing to do with one another: Plato's Atlantis legend, the eastern Mediterranean Sea People, and the hypothetical 'West Culture', which, in his opinion, embraced the Druidic culture of Gaul as well as the Etruscan culture, or that of their ancestors, and that of the Libyans. The fact is that the Sea People initially proceeded from north to south and later from east to west, because the Etruscans and Sardinians are to be identified as the descendants and not the ancestors of the Turšha and the Shirdana, who are mentioned in Egyptian texts and who settled in the western Mediterranean after their defeat in Egypt.[3]

The strange connections constructed in Mediterranean history, which make the Atlantis thesis untenable, should not deter us from considering the possibility of cultural influences having spread from the pre-Indo-European Mediterranean region to the south. Frobenius maintained that the Phoenicians did not know the impluvial house and that they only practiced the templum religion in a degraded form (Frobenius 1912a 344). Was this really so? And how does this fit together with the expansion of glass making, the 'lost wax' method of producing bronze statues and hand looms? Without looking deeper into their origins, Frobenius presumed an early introduction of these techniques from the north, in order to support his Atlantis thesis. Moreover, he thought that Yorùbá mythical conceptions bear witness to influences from outside of Africa. In particular, Frobenius saw in the Yorùbá the descendents of Poseidon or Olókun, a name by which the earliest burial ground of Ifę̀ is denoted even today, it was here that he had unearthed the valuable bronzes and terracottas from Ifę̀. His critics understood him to have postulated a link with the Greeks, without taking into account that he had in view a pre-Indo-European population and also that the later Greeks themselves identified other peoples's sea god with their Poseidon. It is therefore unjustifiable to accuse Frobenius of ethnocentrism. Furthermore, it would have been more worthwhile for the progress of research if, instead of focusing exclusively on the identification of Olókun as the Greek Poseidon, one would have paid closer attention to the further considerations of the great ethnographer. For instance, why do the Yorùbá use the strange name Ębolókun ('sacrifice of the sea god')

to designate the Olókun grove? And further, why is Ilé-Ifẹ sometimes also called *Ilé-Olókun* ('house' 'home' of Olókun)? It would have been more rewarding to explore such details on a broad mythological basis in view of the reconstruction of an earlier stage of Yorùbá culture, than to categorically dismiss all connections with the outside world.

In one of his later writings, Frobenius once again expresses his views about the Atlantis thesis. Without expressly retracting this thesis, he clearly dissociates himself from his earlier views by transferring the origin of his seafaring colonists further towards the east. Besides the Etruscans, he now also mentions the Pelasgians, the Phoenicians, the West Asians and the Hamito-Semites as possible candidates for an immigration. These peoples of the so-called Poseidonic culture would have been driven out and superceded by the Greeks (Frobenius 1926:x, xi-xvi, 8-10). When renowned archaeologists today claim that Frobenius traced back the founding of Ifẹ to Greek colonists, it is in every respect false.[4] It was not Eurocentrism which inspired the brilliant ethnologist to develop his Atlantis thesis, but the insight derived from his vast Africanist knowledge that Yorùbá culture cannot be fully explained from within itself.

Other theses on the origin of the Yorùbá

As early as the beginning of the 19th century, the question of the origin of the Yorùbá had already attracted the interest of Muhammad Bello, son of Uthman dan Fodio and later ruler of the Sokoto-Empire. He committed to writing the traditions, related to him by Muslims from the North, according to which the Yorùbá were descendants of the Canaanites, belonging to the family of Nimrod (Bello 1964:48; trans. Arnett 1922:16).

In precolonial times, the clergyman Samuel Johnson gathered similar versions of the Yorùbá tradition of origin. He recorded them in Ọ̀yọ́, in the northern part of Yorùbáland, where the inhabitants had been in contact with the Muslims for centuries.[5] According to Johnson, Odùdùwà was the pagan heir to the crown of the King of Mecca, Lámídùdù (Nimrod). After the killing of his father by the Muslims, Oduduwà is supposed to have fled with his people to West Africa (Johnson 1921:3-4). Johnson assumed, no doubt, that the original home of the Yorùbá lay in the East. He believed that the Yorùbá had adopted certain practices and traditions of the Hebrews: a primitive form of baptism, oriental clothing, a distorted version of the biblical tale of the killing of the Baal priests by the prophet Elijah (1 Kings: 18) etc. He further thought that Hebrew or Phoenician letters figured on a stone memorial in Ilé, the famous 'staff of Òrányèn' (Johnson 1921:79, 110, 144-5, 154). In the sacrifice of Ẹ̀lẹ́bọ by her own mother Mọrèmi (Miriam), which is still commemorated today in an annual festival in Ife, he saw a degraded form of the Christian story of salvation (*ibid.*, 147-8). The relic called *Idí* among the Ọ̀yọ́-Yorùbá, which people took to be a wrapped-up Koran, he regarded as a rolled-up copy of the Holy Scriptures (*ibid.*, 7).[6] He interpreted these vestiges as an indication of an earlier impact of the Christian-Coptic religion on the Yorùbá. On the basis of the traditions of origin, he reached the conclusion that the Yorùbá migrated from Nubia, where they were supposed to have lived for a long time under Phoenician rule (*ibid.*, 6-7). In spite of Johnson's extremely useful material, his historical reconstruction stands on shaky ground, because even chronologically, the Phoenicians cannot be related

to the Coptic Christians.

Likewise, the missionary Stephen Parrow regards Yorùbá religion from the perspective of the Old Testament. Several cultural parallelisms between the Yorùbá and the Hebrews attracted his attention (Parrow 1926:7). In the realm of myth, he mentions the story of the Flood and a tale about the origin of the Ifá oracle which resembles the Fall (Ellis 1894:58-64). Concerning the similarities of sacrificial practices, Parrow delves more intensively into the matter: he compares the burnt offering practiced as a purification rite with the sacrifice of the Israelities prescribed by the Levitical Code, the release of a sacrificial animal with the practice of sending a scapegoat into the bush and the sprinkling of blood on the two doorposts and the threshold during certain sacrifices with the Passover festival (Parrow 1926:97, 167). On the other hand, he is convinced that it is possible to recognise in Qbè tálá, who participated with the high god (*olórun*) in the act of creation and who was also called the '*son of olórun*', ideas expressed in the New Testament about the agency of the divine *Logos* in the work of creation and the existence of a 'son of God' (*ibid.*, 167). Parrow made no conjectures about the possible historical connections, but he felt that these parallels could be more easily traced back to an early relationship with the Hebrews than to a later influence through Christianity. He thus tended to believe that the Yorùbá were immigrants with a Semitic background (*ibid.*, 44, 166-8).

Less influenced by Biblical ideas was Pastor J. Olúmìdé Lucas who perceived the Yorùbá as Egyptian immigrants who came across the Sudan to West Africa. In support of his theory, Lucas produces extensive linguistic and other comparative material. For example, he provides Egyptian derivations for the names of forty Yorùbá gods and for more than one hundred and fifty words. His proposed etymologies are however very vague and since neither the assumed phonetic and semantic similarities are convincing, they cannot be accepted as evidence for historical reconstruction. The view held by Lucas, that the original home of the Yorùbá was in northern Egypt, from where the immigrants reached West Africa by crossing the Sudan, is therefore as unconvincing as Johnson's Coptic thesis (Lucas 1948:353).

Next we should turn to the colonial ethnographer P. Amaury Talbot whose general considerations seem at first sight to be more plausible, although they are founded on little concrete evidence. In the historical introduction to his voluminous *Ethnography of the Peoples of Southern Nigeria* he postulates a connection between the migration of the Yorùbá, the introduction of bronze technology into southern Nigeria and the domination of Egypt by the Hyksos in the 17th century BC. He supposes that soon after their arrival in West Africa, the Yorùbá founded Ifẹ and made it their capital. Later they became adept in the making of pottery and in iron-work. According to Talbot, the god of war and iron, Ògún, reached the Yorùbá together with the technology of iron production. He even expressed the idea that the great migration of the Bantu people right across Africa was the result of an influx of people from the Nile valley somewhat connected with the Yorùbá immigration. Rejecting Frobenius' theory of communications with pre-Carthaginians by sea, Talbot suggested that remnants of Tyrrhenian arts and beliefs had filtered through by war of the Carthaginians, who were closely allied with

the Etruscans. Although he specifically mentions examples of Mycenean and other old Mediterranean influences in West Africa , he thinks that the principal foreign influence was that of Egypt. Contrary to the early Frobenius, he maintains that aspects of the Yoruba religion, together with the glass-ware, water-storage structures and terra-cottas came from the north-east, not from the north (Talbot 1926, vol. 1:19-22).

We are indebted to Sẹ̀á búrí Bíòbákú for the first and until now the only coherent treatise regarding the origin of the Yorùbá (Bíòbákú 1955). This historian endeavours in the first-place to distinguish between various waves of Yorubá migrations which followed each other, thereby somewhat neglecting the cultural connections of the Yorùbá with the outside world. Relying mainly on the litteral interpretation of oral traditions, he comes to the conclusion that two great Yorubá migration thrusts have to be differentiated from one another, an early migration in the 7th century AD. and a later migration in the 10th century AD. Most decisive for this chronology is the assumption that the Yorùbá took part in the Kisra migration. Following Frobenius, Bíòbákú identifies Kisra with the Persian ruler Khusrau Parviz, whose troops occupied Egypt from 619-628 AD. According to him, a second group immigrants from upper Egypt, led by Odùdùwa, reached Yorùbáland and founded Ifẹ̀ in the tenth century AD. Bíòbákú was thoroughly convinced that all characteristic features of Yorùbá culture were introduced to West Africa by migrant groups from Upper Egypt and the Near East: polytheism tinged with Judaism, advanced arts and crafts, urban culture and political institutions (*ibid.*, 20-3).

Since independence, the regional paradigm has replaced the transcontinental theories of the origin of African peoples. The new point of view is determined by the conviction that African peoples, like the European nation states, are best defined by their language. Yorùbá belongs to the Kwa language group and is, despite considerable cultural divergencies, closely related to its neighbouring languages. Instead of looking to the people of the Mediterranean area, be they Pelasgian, Etruscan, Phoenician, Egyptian or Hebrew, historians now only consider closely related peoples as possible candidates for particular migration movements. More attention is however devoted to the attempt to discover endogenous factors to explain cultural developments, such as the 'lost wax' technique for the casting of bronze sculptures, glass production and iron-ore smelting, that far-reaching external influences are considered, and then exclusively in the context of trade relationship. On the basis of the feedback theory developed by Henige and others, traditions of origin which point to links with places and peoples outside of Africa are generally dismissed as late inputs from written material.[7]

The archaeological age of Ifẹ̀

Historians placed great expectations on archaeological research in Ifẹ̀, where Frobenius had found at the beginning of this century, the naturalistic bronze and terracotta heads. Ifẹ̀ is located in the center of all Yorùbá myths and traditions; it is here that Odùduwà is believed to have created the earth, and from here the founders of the different Yorùbá kingdoms were supposed to have emerged. Even today, people point out the place where Odùduwa descended on a chain from heaven down to earth. A number of stone monuments, as well as ritual and burial sites of the rulers of Ifẹ̀ and

Benin can all be found in the town or in its immediate vicnity. Frobenius pointed out that Ifẹ̀ was surrounded on all sides by swamps, which is why the site of the town could not be shifted (Frobenius 1912a:271-2). Therefore, it may be supposed that the earliest settlement site of Ifẹ̀ is located more or less within the precincts of the present town.

However, the thin settlement remains make the discovery of a relatively undisturbed stratigraphy quite unlikely. Furthermore archaeologists have focused their attention on the sites in which the inhabitants of the town found art objects and not on the remains of the town as such. It was first in the seventies that Peter Garlake excavated a site in order to answer questions about the history of the town (Garlake 1977:57-96). It was then discovered that the locations where bronze and terracotta figures were most commonly found did not correspond to their primary contexts. In some cases, the objects had obviously been hidden to protect them from theft. Even today, some of the figures which 'return to life' during annual festivals are carefully buried again in specific places at the end of the ceremonies. Moreover since the present-day inhabitants of Ifẹ̀ seldom know anything precise about the customs and practices of their ancestors, it is quite difficult to estimate the original functions and even more so the age of the pieces one finds.

The situation is quite different in Igbó Olókun (the Olókun grove), located north of the town, where Frobenius discovered the naturalistic heads and several broken artifacts. For centuries, the inhabitants of Ifẹ̀ have been digging up glass beads as well as bronze and terracotta objects at this site. If they were lucky, they came upon burial chambers at a depth of four to seven meters in which they found urns with glass beads and terracotta figures. Furthermore, glass-making crucibles from Igbó Olókun can be found in relatively recent shrines of the city, but it seems that all knowledge of these crucibles had already been lost at the time of their reuse, because some of them were containing beads and in one case people were convinced to have discovered the 'drum of Odùduwa' (Willett 1967:24-5). Nevertheless, the crucibles, the slagg and the beads from Igbó Olókun tend to show that Ifẹ̀ was the center of a productive glass industry (Frobenius 1912a:311-2).[8] With respect to the naturalistic terracotta heads, Frank Willett, who for many years led the excavations in Ifẹ̀, is of the opinion that they represent specific kings and he supposes that they were used to take the place of the kings during the second burials. In his view, the findings from two other important places in Ifẹ̀, the Wúnmọnijè compound and the grove of Olókun Wákọdè, were also originally from Igbó Olókun (Willet 1967:24-6). In spite of the significance of these findings, there were no excavations undertaken in Igbó Olókun, the most important primary site of Ifẹ̀, with the exception of a few test pits in the early days of the archaeological investigations (Fagg 1953:849). Consequently there are also no datings available for the obviously oldest site in Ifẹ̀. We do not know for certain whether Igbó Olókun once belonged to the Ifẹ̀ settlement area or not.

The site of Ìta Yemọ́ọ́, located in the northeast of Ifẹ̀, close to the old town wall, deserves special consideration. Near this site, Willett found bronze and terracotta figures, in their archaeological context, close to a particular ritual site, which still plays a major part in the Ọ̀bẹ́ tálá festival. The figures lay on a potsherd pavement. Willett

identified the place as a ritual site enclosed by mud walls and roofed (Willett 1971b:1-35). The datings of the pavements fall between the 11th and 12th centuries; the materials underneath the pavements were dated at a time shortly before this (Willett 1971b:24; Shaw 1978:148). Since the bronze figures lay on the same type of pavement, it was first assumed that they belonged to the same period. However, two thermoluminescence datings, obtained later from fired clay remains found inside of the bronze figures, show that they only date from the 14th or 15th century (Willett and Fleming 1976:138). Despite this discrepency, it is clear that Ìta Yemòó is a site belonging to the middle age.

Dates from the 15th and 16th centuries are available for three further bronze figures from Ifẹ̀, which were not found in their original contexts (Willett and Fleming 1976: 136-7). The pavement under the remains of a templum house excavated by Garlake, with which sherds from glass melting pots were also associated, yielded dates from the 13th and 14th centuries (Garlake 1977:72.) These various elements prove that the classical period in Ifẹ̀ and the glass production associated with it have to be dated in the 12th to 14th centuries and that, as far as we now know, the bronze figures were produced in the 14th and 15th centuries.

On account of these dates, several authors have distinguished three periods in the history of the town of Ifẹ̀: an early period without pavements, a pavement period and a late period also without pavements, in which the middle of the three corresponds to the classical period (Shaw 1978:162-3; Ọbáyẹmí 1985:271). Three considerations, however, make it doubtful that this periodisation can claim general validity. First, it may be assumed that Igbó Olókun was once part of the Ifẹ̀ settlement area and that it had been abandoned a long time ago; as long as there are no datings or stratigraphically well-defined findings available for the site, no valid estimation as to the age of the town can be made. Second, for the present area of the town, the dates obtained for the burial grounds of the rulers of Benin confirm that the city was already settled from the 6th to the 10th century (Willett 1971a:365-6). Since Ifẹ̀ is older than Benin, the founding date for the former must be placed much further in the past. Third, the double figure from Ìta Yemòó which has most frequently been identified as the 'royal'pair' could actually represent the divine couple, Ọbèn tálá and Yemòó', since the figure was found near the present shrine of the goddess Yemòó (which is the reason why the site is called Ìta Yemòó) (Eluba 1985:9). However, there are indications that Ọbèn tálá and Yemòó were originally two antagonistic deities in Ifè mythology.[10] If this assumption is correct one would have to suppose that Ifẹ̀'s 'classical period' was a rather late period, in terms of the evolution of mythology. Given these elements of doubt, it seems rather risky to date the process of political centralisation and the formation of a priesthood to the beginning of the archaeologically proven 'classical period' in Ifẹ̀ (Shaw 1978;157-9). In view of the numerous, archaeologically unresolved questions about Ifẹ̀, one should not rule out the possibility that the peak of Ifẹ̀ culture has to be dated much further back in time than historians are now prepared to admit.

Concluding remarks

Since independence, Africanist historians were eager to stigmatise the cultural-historical approach as a method which has only in view to prove the validity of the Hamitic hypothesis. But in fact, by turning away from the external historical context, historians have given up considering important phenomena in African history, leaving these subjects to other disciplines. The origin of the Afro-Asiatic remnant-languages and cultures of the Chadian region were henceforth only a subject for linguists, who in turn mostly contented themselves with internal reconstructions and failed to take chronology into account; the Bantu expansion, which originated around the Lake Chad area or somewhere to the south of it, is about to become a domain for linguists who cannot be expected to consider possible links with political upheavals affecting the regions north and northeast of the Sahara. A further consequence of this demise is the blind confidence placed in archaeological findings and their interpretation by a handful of archaeologists dealing with the proto-historical period. For them, the middle Nile valley was, according to the formulation of Connah, not a corridor but a cul-de-sac (Connah 1987:24-66). Before the coming of the camel to North Africa and the rise of the regular trans-Saharan trade, the Sahara was also thought to be a strong barrier to the circulation of ideas and people (Mauny 1970:78-137). This means that most of the continent was severed from the world and regarded as a self-standing isolated entity.

The isolationist approach has the strongest effect on the problem of state foundation. Whereas earlier explanations used the idea of a common denominator to account for the similarities of African sacred kingdoms (Oliver and Fage 1988:31-8), historians now see these states as totally independent entities, shooting up out of the ground like mushrooms. Vague trade relationships, an imaginary threat of an unknown enemy, or just a *clever big man*, who can be found everywhere, are in this vein thought to be enough to speed up the process of political centralisation which mutates a tribe into a state. At the time in which the euphoria of independence was making waves, it seemed imperative to assign the precolonial foundation of states to a recent period, in order to document the steady growth of civilisation in Africa, which could be continued after the gloomy chapter of colonial exploitation[11]. Similarly, indications of regressive development and cultural decay were ignored, even if the corresponding periods might have proven to be momentary and reversible, since such considerations were out of tune in a time of inbridled Afro-optimism. At present, with the first stages of postcolonialism behind us, should not the historians dismount from their high horses and focus their energies more on the facts than on mere wishful thinking?

As far as the Yorùbá are concerned, the break between colonial and postcolonial histriography was more radical than it was for any other African people. Far away from the shores of the Mediterranean and the banks of the Nile, it seemed to the historian, interested in world history, that the ground had been pulled out from under him. Here archaeology also had its hour of glory. And indeed, with the available dating methods, it was unobjectionably proven that the classical culture from Ifẹ̀ did not belong to the murky prehistory of presumed foreign influences, as Frobenius and others had believed, but to the late middle ages. In this time, glass bead production as well as

terracotta and bronze artwork flourished, and many houses and temples in the town were covered with pavements of pebbles and potsherds. No one should claim that we are faced here with a declining culture which has no prospect for revival and genuine development.

On the other hand, these momentous signals of African creativity do not rule out the possibility that basic elements of statehood, the cult of the dead, the prime mythical concepts, as well ■ urbanity, which formed the background of the artistic creations today admired worldwide, were rooted much earlier among the Yorùbá. Ifẹ̀ flourished in the late middle ages, there is no doubt about that, but with the datings available to us today, the problem of the founding of the city is far from being resolved. Possible connections with cultures of the outside world in early periods of African history should in our time no longer, *ipso facto* be brandmarked as diffusionist absurdities belonging to the colonial age and thus land on the garbage heap of outdated ideas.[12] Only when the historian of Ancient Africa is prepared to acknowledge that a process of decay might precede or succeed a process of growth, will he be able to cast off the role of a professional panegyrist and instead serve enlightenment, irrespective of ideological and academic opposition.

NOTES

1. This article was originally written in German for readers with no knowledge of Yorùbá culture and history ("Ife und der Ursprung der Yorùbá: Historiographische Betrachtungen." *Periplus* 5,(1995)). In the hope that the article might be useful in reviving the debate on Yorùbá origins', it has been translated into English and republished - in a slightly revised and expanded form - in this journal.
2. Frobenius 1926:199; Baumann 1936:132; Mauny 1961:182.
3. Kienitz 1982:104-8, 165-70, 197-8; Stadelmann 1984:814-822.
4. Willett 1967:14; Smith 1988:23; Shaw 1978:127-8.
5. For a biographical sketch of Samuel Johnson's career see Doortmont 1991:167-182.
6. *Idi* means 'bundle'.
7. Beier 1955:25-32; Smith 1988:13-28; Law 1973:25-40; Shaw 1978:157-163; Ọbáyemí 1985:255-322. For a general presentation of the feed back theory see Henige 1982:81-87.
8. Shaw expresses doubts as to whether the glass itself was made locally (1978:146).
9. Willett thought that they represented the Ọọni (King of Ifẹ̀) and his queen (1967:Pl. 10, III, p. 72).
10. For a detailed description of the festival, see Stevens 1966:184-199.
11. For more on this euphoria and its pervading influence on African historiography see Vansina 1994:111-136.
12. Concerning Yorùbá history, see the recently published article of Zachernuk 1994:427-455; for the opposite view see Lange 1994:213-328.

Bibliography

Arnett, Edward J., *The Rise of the Sokoto Fulani*, Kano 1922
Baumann, Hermann, *Schopfung und Urzeit der Menschen im Mythos afrikanischer Völker*, Berlin 1936.
Becker, Carl H., *Islamstudien*, vol. II, Leipzig 1932
- "Leo Frobenius und die Brülle des Islam". *Der Islam* 4 (1913), 303-312
Beier, Ulli, "Before Oduduwa". *Odu* 3 (1955), 25-32
Bello, Muhammad, *Infāq al-maysūr*, ed. A. M. Gumm, Cairo 1964.
Biobaku, Saburi O. (ed.), *The Origin of the Yorubas*, Lagos 1955
Connah, Graham, *African Civilisations*, Cambridge 1987
Doortmont, M. R., "Samuel Johnson (1846-1901): Missionary, diplomat and historian". *in* T. Falola (ed.), *Yoruba Historiography*, Wisconsin 1991, 167-182
Ellis, Alfred B., *The Yoruba-Speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast of West Africa*, London 1894
Euba, Tàn, "The Oòni of Ifẹ̀'s Are crown and the concept of the divine head", *Nigeria Magazine* 53 (1985), 1-10
Fagg, Bernard, *Annual Report for the Year 1952-3*, Lagos 1954
Farrow, Steven, *Faith, Fancies and Fetish or Yoruba Paganism*, London 1926
Frobenius, Leo, *Und Afrika sprach*, Berlin 1912
- *Atlantische Götterlehre*, Jena 1926
Garlake, Peter, "Excavations in the Woye Asin family land in Ife". *West African Journal of Archaeology* 7 (1977), 57-96
Henige, David, *Oral Historiography*, London 1982
Johnson, Samuel, *The History of the Yorubas*, London 1921
Kienitz, Friedrich, *Völker im Schatten*, Munich 1982
Lange, Dierk, "Der Ursprung des westafrikanischen Wettergottes Schango", *Saeculum* 45 (1994), 213-238
Law, Robin, "Traditional history", *in* Biobaku (ed.), *Sources*, 25-40
Lipinski, Edouard, (ed.), *Dictionnaire de la civilisation phenicienne et punique*, Brepolis 1992
Lucas, J. Olumide, *The Religion of the Yorubas*, Lagos 1948
Mauny, Raymond, *Tableau geographique de l'ouest africain au moyen age*, Dakar 1961
- *Les siècles obscurs de l'Afrique Noire*, Paris 1970
Obayemi, Ade, "The Yoruba and Edo-speaking peoples and their neighbours before 1600", *in* Ade Ajayi and Michael Crowder (eds.), *History of West Africa*, vol. I, 3rd ed., Harlow 1985, 255-322
Oliver, Roland and John Fage, *A Short History of Africa*, 6th ed., London 1988
Plato, *Dialoge — Timaios und Kritias*, transl. O. Apelt, Leipzig 1922
Shaw, Thurston, *Nigeria — Its Archaeology and Early History*, London 1978.
Smith, Robert, *Kingdoms of the Yoruba*, 3rd ed., London 1988
Stadelmann, Rainer, "Seevölker", *Lexikon der Ägyptologie*, vol. V, Wiesbaden 1984, 814-822.
Stevens, Philip, "Orishan-nla festival", *Nigeria Magazine* 90 (1966), 184-188.

Talbot, P. Amaury, *The Peoples of Southern Nigeria*, vol. I, London 1926.
Vansina, Jan, *Living with Africa*, Madison 1994.
Willett, Frank, *Ife in the History of West African Sculpture*, London 1967.
- "A survey of recent results in the radiocarbon chronology of Western and Northern Africa", *Journal of African History* 12 (1971), 339-370.
- "Nigeria", *in:* Peter Shinnie (ed.), *The African Iron Age*, Oxford 1971, 1-35.
Willett, Frank and S. J. Fleming, "A catalogue of important Nigerian copper-alloy castings dated by thermoluminescence", *Archeometry* 18 (1976), 135-146.
Zachernuk, Philip, "Of origins and colonial order: Southern Nigerian historians and the 'Hamitic hypothesis' c. 1870-1970", *Journal of African History* 35 (1994), 427-455.

Links between West Africa and the Ancient Orient[1]

Dierk Lange, Bayreuth

Most colonial administrators and anthropologists of the colonial period thought of Africa in terms of foreign influences. With the independence of African states this attitude has given way to an approach which insists on internal forces of development. It is therefore not surprising that modern historians of Africa conceive of the rise of early states and other pre-Islamic cultural and political developments as phenomena which owe little or nothing to foreign stimulation. However, up to now little evidence has been produced in support of either point of view.

Foreign influences are clearly seen in Nubia, where Egyptian colonialism laid the basis for the Meroitic state in the second millenium BC, and also in Ethiopia, where South Arabian immigrants spread their Semitic language and other elements of the Near Eastern civilisations in the millenium preceding the Christian era.[2] In both cases, a foreign state-model was imposed on African societies. Here, however, we are dealing with peripheral people, living in the immediate proximity of powerful empires. Their favourable geographical position allowed them to react against their northern neighbours and to leave in turn their own stamp on world history.

West Africa, on the other hand, was difficult to reach for conquerors from beyond the Sahara. And indeed, neither the institutions of surviving states nor the cultural artefacts found by archaeologists seem to show tangible proof of any foreign interference. Most historians therefore assume that the great increase in trans-Saharan trade which followed the Arab conquest of North Africa produced the initial stimulation which led to the foundation of the early West African kingdoms. This supposition finds some support in the evidence provided by the written sources: while classical authors were silent about West African states and peoples, the earliest Arab geographers mentioned the powerful kingdoms of Ghana, Gao and Kanem. Historians therefore tend to believe that the new trade opportunities sparked off

1 I am grateful to Gabrielle Shortland for stylistic corrections and discussion.

2 W. Y. Adams, *Nubia Corridor to Africa*, London, 1977, 217-245; K. Zibelius-Chen, *Die ägyptische Expansion nach Nubien*, Wiesbaden, 1988; E. Ullendorf, *The Ethiopians*, London, 3rd ed. 1973, 45-55.

entirely new forms of political centralization at several points of the Saharan fringe by the eighth century AD.[3]

Anthropologists had earlier pursued a different line of investigation. To them similarities in the structure and rituals of the kingdoms of West, East and Central Africa were of paramount importance. In their opinion these similarities were so striking that they regarded individual states as manifestations of a common underlying pattern called "divine kingship". Although examples of divine kingship have been reported from other parts of the world, in Africa the corresponding institutions have taken on a specific form which set them apart. This observation in turn gave rise to the idea that a particular form of kingship had spread from a common point of origin outside sub-Saharan Africa.[4] Additionally, oral traditions with their references to culture heroes from beyond Black Africa received the attention of early investigators and reinforced their impression of foreign influences.[5]

1. The Sudanic State

Taking these anthropological elements into consideration, the historians John Fage and Roland Oliver developed the theory of the "Sudanic State", according to which important elements of the Egyptian state were transferred via Meroe to West and East Africa. They did not have in mind the grafting *en bloc* of a whole structure, but rather the dissemination of a set of ideas, also influenced by Yemen and Sassanid Persia.[6] Their concept of a variety of influences coming not only from the Pharaonic civilisation, but which filtered through Egypt and Meroe, was probably based on the observation that Egypt is hardly ever mentioned as the ultimate point of origin in the oral traditions of West African people.

The theory of the "Sudanic State" has been sharply criticized, and it has recently been abandoned by Roland Oliver. Like other historians Oliver now relies heavily on archaeological findings although only a few sites relevant to the formation of states have been excavated in West Africa.[7] Even Jan Vansina, whose use of oral traditions as historical sources has earned him a great reputation among historians, has voiced strong reservations about the theory due to its insistence on elements extraneous to Africa. However, his arguments concern only the structural similarities between African kingdoms and they do not

3 R. Mauny, *Les siècles obscurs de l'Afrique Noire*, Paris, 1970, 78-137; Th. Shaw, "The prehistory of West Africa", *in*: J. Ajayi and M. Crowder, *History of West Africa*, vol. I, 3rd. ed. Harlow, 1985, 77-80.

4 L. Frobenius, *Und Afrika sprach. II. Band: An der Schwelle des verehrungswürdigen Byzanz*, Berlin, 1912, 1-11; H. Baumann, *et al.*, *Völkerkunde von Afrika*, Essen, 1939, 268-274; D. Westermann, *Geschichte Afrikas*, Köln, 1952, 30-46.

5 Frobenius, *Und Afrika*, II, 335-344; K. Dittmer, "Afrika südlich der Sahara", *in*: K. Dittmer, *et al.* (eds.), *Saeculum Weltgeschichte*, vol. IV, Freiburg, 1967, 610-613.

6 R. Oliver and J. Fage, *A Short History of Africa*, 1st ed. London, 1962; 6th ed. London, 1988, 31-38.

7 R. Oliver, *The African Experience*, London, 1991.

deal with traditions of genesis or linguistic data.[8] In any case, general considerations against diffusionism should not lead us to disregard ethnographic or linguistic evidence if this shows that sub-Saharan societies did not develop in isolation from the outside world.

However, it must also be admitted that any attempt to correlate African oral material with dated and written elements from other civilisations involves a serious bias since it neglects the mass of linguistic and ethnographic data which as yet cannot be brought into a chronological perspective. The evidence for a Mesopotamian influence, which is the subject of this paper, should therefore be considered with caution. Although it would suggest a far earlier foundation of states in Africa than has previously been admitted, it may well apply only to a particular region.

Before criticizing the theory of the "Sudanic State", I would like to present in detail some of the arguments advanced by John Fage concerning the rise of early states in West Africa. Besides comparing ethnographic relics, Fage bases his considerations mainly on traditions of origin. The traditions taken into account revolve around two notions: Kisra and Yemen. Leo Frobenius had already identified Kisra, the founding hero of the Borgu kingdoms and of other states of the Niger-Chad region, with the Sassanid king Khusraw II Parviz who had occupied Egypt from 619 to 627.[9] Fage points out that besides Egypt, the Sassanids also dominated Southern Arabia, whence the idea of a Yeminite origin might have spread.[10] Also, he regarded the Sayfid tradition of Kanem and the Bayajidda legend of Hausaland as further instances of the cultural influence of the Near East. Strictly speaking, however, Bayajidda was considered to be identical with Abū Yazid the tenth century rebel of Kairouan, and must therefore represent more recent influences from North Africa.[11] Although Fage did not think that these traditions of genesis were unaffected by Islamic influence, he maintained that they reflected some kind of genuine knowledge about specific origins.

Critics of this view deny that these traditions refer to historical events. They argue that in some cases as recently as the beginning of the nineteenth century, Muslim *literati* introduced ideas about the pre-Islamic past of Arabia and Mesopotamia to the Muslim communities of West Africa and to the courts of pagan kings. Among the latter these ideas were presumably well received and quickly woven into the fabric of indigenous traditions in order to provide an ideological basis for pagan resistance against Islam.[12] Indeed, Nimrod and Mecca - two

8 J. Vansina, "The roots of African cultures", *in*: Ph. Curtin *et al.*, *African History*, Harlow, 1978, 30-36.

9 Frobenius, *Und Afrika*, II, 341; J. D. Fage, *A History of Africa*, London, 1978, 63-5.

10 Fage, *History*, 64-65; Oliver and Fage, *Short History*, 37.

11 Fage, *History*, 61. For the identification of Bayajidda as the hero from Baghdad see D. Lange, "Hausa-Traditionen in ihrer Abhängigkeit von Kanem-Borno und Nubien", *Anthropos*, 88 (1993), 55-56, 67.

12 Ph. Stevens, "The Kisra legends and the distortion of historical traditions", *Journal of African History*, 16, 2, 1975, 189-200; R. Law, *The Oyo Empire c. 1600 - c. 1836*, Oxford, 1977, 27-29.

entirely new forms of political centralization at several points of the Saharan fringe by the eighth century AD.[3]

Anthropologists had earlier pursued a different line of investigation. To them similarities in the structure and rituals of the kingdoms of West, East and Central Africa were of paramount importance. In their opinion these similarities were so striking that they regarded individual states as manifestations of a common underlying pattern called "divine kingship". Although examples of divine kingship have been reported from other parts of the world, in Africa the corresponding institutions have taken on a specific form which set them apart. This observation in turn gave rise to the idea that a particular form of kingship had spread from a common point of origin outside sub-Saharan Africa.[4] Additionally, oral traditions with their references to culture heroes from beyond Black Africa received the attention of early investigators and reinforced their impression of foreign influences.[5]

1. The Sudanic State

Taking these anthropological elements into consideration, the historians John Fage and Roland Oliver developed the theory of the "Sudanic State", according to which important elements of the Egyptian state were transferred via Meroe to West and East Africa. They did not have in mind the grafting *en bloc* of a whole structure, but rather the dissemination of a set of ideas, also influenced by Yemen and Sassanid Persia.[6] Their concept of a variety of influences coming not only from the Pharaonic civilisation, but which filtered through Egypt and Meroe, was probably based on the observation that Egypt is hardly ever mentioned as the ultimate point of origin in the oral traditions of West African people.

The theory of the "Sudanic State" has been sharply criticized, and it has recently been abandoned by Roland Oliver. Like other historians Oliver now relies heavily on archaeological findings although only a few sites relevant to the formation of states have been excavated in West Africa.[7] Even Jan Vansina, whose use of oral traditions as historical sources has earned him a great reputation among historians, has voiced strong reservations about the theory due to its insistence on elements extraneous to Africa. However, his arguments concern only the structural similarities between African kingdoms and they do not

3 R. Mauny, *Les siècles obscurs de l'Afrique Noire*, Paris, 1970, 78-137; Th. Shaw, "The prehistory of West Africa", *in*: J. Ajayi and M. Crowder, *History of West Africa*, vol. I, 3rd. ed. Harlow, 1985, 77-80.

4 L. Frobenius, *Und Afrika sprach. II. Band: An der Schwelle des verehrungswürdigen Byzanz*, Berlin, 1912, 1-11; H. Baumann, *et al.*, *Völkerkunde von Afrika*, Essen, 1939, 268-274; D. Westermann, *Geschichte Afrikas*, Köln, 1952, 30-46.

5 Frobenius, *Und Afrika*, II, 335-344; K. Dittmer, "Afrika südlich der Sahara", *in*: K. Dittmer, *et al.* (eds.), *Saeculum Weltgeschichte*, vol. IV, Freiburg, 1967, 610-613.

6 R. Oliver and J. Fage, *A Short History of Africa*, 1st ed. London, 1962; 6th ed. London, 1988, 31-38.

7 R. Oliver, *The African Experience*, London, 1991.

deal with traditions of genesis or linguistic data.[8] In any case, general considerations against diffusionism should not lead us to disregard ethnographic or linguistic evidence if this shows that sub-Saharan societies did not develop in isolation from the outside world.

However, it must also be admitted that any attempt to correlate African oral material with dated and written elements from other civilisations involves a serious bias since it neglects the mass of linguistic and ethnographic data which as yet cannot be brought into a chronological perspective. The evidence for a Mesopotamian influence, which is the subject of this paper, should therefore be considered with caution. Although it would suggest a far earlier foundation of states in Africa than has previously been admitted, it may well apply only to a particular region.

Before criticizing the theory of the "Sudanic State", I would like to present in detail some of the arguments advanced by John Fage concerning the rise of early states in West Africa. Besides comparing ethnographic relics, Fage bases his considerations mainly on traditions of origin. The traditions taken into account revolve around two notions: Kisra and Yemen. Leo Frobenius had already identified Kisra, the founding hero of the Borgu kingdoms and of other states of the Niger-Chad region, with the Sassanid king Khusraw II Parvīz who had occupied Egypt from 619 to 627.[9] Fage points out that besides Egypt, the Sassanids also dominated Southern Arabia, whence the idea of a Yeminite origin might have spread.[10] Also, he regarded the Sayfid tradition of Kanem and the Bayajidda legend of Hausaland as further instances of the cultural influence of the Near East. Strictly speaking, however, Bayajidda was considered to be identical with Abū Yazīd the tenth century rebel of Kairouan, and must therefore represent more recent influences from North Africa.[11] Although Fage did not think that these traditions of genesis were unaffected by Islamic influence, he maintained that they reflected some kind of genuine knowledge about specific origins.

Critics of this view deny that these traditions refer to historical events. They argue that in some cases as recently as the beginning of the nineteenth century, Muslim *literati* introduced ideas about the pre-Islamic past of Arabia and Mesopotamia to the Muslim communities of West Africa and to the courts of pagan kings. Among the latter these ideas were presumably well received and quickly woven into the fabric of indigenous traditions in order to provide an ideological basis for pagan resistance against Islam.[12] Indeed, Nimrod and Mecca - two

8 J. Vansina, "The roots of African cultures", *in*: Ph. Curtin *et al.*, *African History*, Harlow, 1978, 30-36.

9 Frobenius, *Und Afrika*, II, 341; J. D. Fage, *A History of Africa*, London, 1978, 63-5.

10 Fage, *History*, 64-65; Oliver and Fage, *Short History*, 37.

11 Fage, *History*, 63. For the identification of Bayajidda as the hero from Baghdad see D. Lange, "Hausa-Traditionen in ihrer Abhängigkeit von Kanem-Borno und Nubien", *Anthropos*, 88 (1993), 55-56, 67.

12 Ph. Stevens, "The Kisra legends and the distortion of historical traditions", *Journal of African History*, 16, 2, 1975, 189-200; R. Law, *The Oyo Empire c. 1600 - c. 1836*, Oxford, 1977, 27-29;

entirely new forms of political centralization at several points of the Saharan fringe by the eighth century AD.[3]

Anthropologists had earlier pursued a different line of investigation. To them similarities in the structure and rituals of the kingdoms of West, East and Central Africa were of paramount importance. In their opinion these similarities were so striking that they regarded individual states as manifestations of a common underlying pattern called "divine kingship". Although examples of divine kingship have been reported from other parts of the world, in Africa the corresponding institutions have taken on a specific form which set them apart. This observation in turn gave rise to the idea that a particular form of kingship had spread from a common point of origin outside sub-Saharan Africa.[4] Additionally, oral traditions with their references to culture heroes from beyond Black Africa received the attention of early investigators and reinforced their impression of foreign influences.[5]

1. The Sudanic State

Taking these anthropological elements into consideration, the historians John Fage and Roland Oliver developed the theory of the "Sudanic State", according to which important elements of the Egyptian state were transferred via Meroe to West and East Africa. They did not have in mind the grafting *en bloc* of a whole structure, but rather the dissemination of a set of ideas, also influenced by Yemen and Sassanid Persia.[6] Their concept of a variety of influences coming not only from the Pharaonic civilisation, but which filtered through Egypt and Meroe, was probably based on the observation that Egypt is hardly ever mentioned as the ultimate point of origin in the oral traditions of West African people.

The theory of the "Sudanic State" has been sharply criticized, and it has recently been abandoned by Roland Oliver. Like other historians Oliver now relies heavily on archaeological findings although only a few sites relevant to the formation of states have been excavated in West Africa.[7] Even Jan Vansina, whose use of oral traditions as historical sources has earned him a great reputation among historians, has voiced strong reservations about the theory due to its insistence on elements extraneous to Africa. However, his arguments concern only the structural similarities between African kingdoms and they do not

3 R. Mauny, *Les siècles obscurs de l'Afrique Noire*, Paris, 1970, 78-137; Th. Shaw, "The prehistory of West Africa", *in*: J. Ajayi and M. Crowder, *History of West Africa*, vol. I, 3rd. ed. Harlow, 1985, 77-80.

4 L. Frobenius, *Und Afrika sprach. II. Band: An der Schwelle des verehrungswürdigen Byzanz*, Berlin, 1912, 1-11; H. Baumann, *et al.*, *Völkerkunde von Afrika*, Essen, 1939, 268-274; D. Westermann, *Geschichte Afrikas*, Köln, 1952, 30-46.

5 Frobenius, *Und Afrika*, II, 335-344; K. Dittmer, "Afrika südlich der Sahara", *in*: K. Dittmer, *et al.* (eds.), *Saeculum Weltgeschichte*, vol. IV, Freiburg, 1967, 610-613.

6 R. Oliver and J. Fage, *A Short History of Africa*, 1st ed. London, 1962; 6th ed. London, 1988, 31-38.

7 R. Oliver, *The African Experience*, London, 1991.

deal with traditions of genesis or linguistic data.[8] In any case, general considerations against diffusionism should not lead us to disregard ethnographic or linguistic evidence if this shows that sub-Saharan societies did not develop in isolation from the outside world.

However, it must also be admitted that any attempt to correlate African oral material with dated and written elements from other civilisations involves a serious bias since it neglects the mass of linguistic and ethnographic data which as yet cannot be brought into a chronological perspective. The evidence for a Mesopotamian influence, which is the subject of this paper, should therefore be considered with caution. Although it would suggest a far earlier foundation of states in Africa than has previously been admitted, it may well apply only to a particular region.

Before criticizing the theory of the "Sudanic State", I would like to present in detail some of the arguments advanced by John Fage concerning the rise of early states in West Africa. Besides comparing ethnographic relics, Fage bases his considerations mainly on traditions of origin. The traditions taken into account revolve around two notions: Kisra and Yemen. Leo Frobenius had already identified Kisra, the founding hero of the Borgu kingdoms and of other states of the Niger-Chad region, with the Sassanid king Khusraw II Parvīz who had occupied Egypt from 619 to 627.[9] Fage points out that besides Egypt, the Sassanids also dominated Southern Arabia, whence the idea of a Yeminite origin might have spread.[10] Also, he regarded the Sayfid tradition of Kanem and the Bayajidda legend of Hausaland as further instances of the cultural influence of the Near East. Strictly speaking, however, Bayajidda was considered to be identical with Abū Yazīd the tenth century rebel of Kairouan, and must therefore represent more recent influences from North Africa.[11] Although Fage did not think that these traditions of genesis were unaffected by Islamic influence, he maintained that they reflected some kind of genuine knowledge about specific origins.

Critics of this view deny that these traditions refer to historical events. They argue that in some cases as recently as the beginning of the nineteenth century, Muslim *literati* introduced ideas about the pre-Islamic past of Arabia and Mesopotamia to the Muslim communities of West Africa and to the courts of pagan kings. Among the latter these ideas were presumably well received and quickly woven into the fabric of indigenous traditions in order to provide an ideological basis for pagan resistance against Islam.[12] Indeed, Nimrod and Mecca - two

8 J. Vansina, "The roots of African cultures", *in*: Ph. Curtin *et al.*, *African History*, Harlow, 1978, 30-36.

9 Frobenius, *Und Afrika*, II, 341; J. D. Fage, *A History of Africa*, London, 1978, 63-5.

10 Fage, *History*, 64-65; Oliver and Fage, *Short History*, 37.

11 Fage, *History*, 63. For the identification of Bayajidda as 'the hero from Baghdad' see D. Lange, "Hausa-Traditionen in ihrer Abhängigkeit von Kanem-Borno und Nubien", *Anthropos*, 88 (1993), 55-56, 67.

12 Ph. Stevens, "The Kisra legends and the distortion of historical traditions", *Journal of African History*, 16, 2, 1975, 189-200; R. Law, *The Oyo Empire c. 1600 - c. 1836*, Oxford, 1977, 27-29.

important elements included in numerous traditions of genesis not considered by Fage - are mentioned in contexts where they appear to be marginal to the indigenous traditions.[13] However, this is not the case with Kisra (Kisira), who is considered in Borgu to be the ancestor of the ruling Wasangari[14], nor is it the case in Borno, where a number of Kanuri sections are convinced that their ultimate homeland is Yemen.[15] It is difficult to believe that artificial and historically false suggestions have been merged so firmly into the world-view of African peoples that they could give rise to totally incorrect ideas about highly respected ancestors and revered ancestral homes.

On the other hand, it is certainly justifiable to regard with scepticism those Muslim concepts which are not firmly embedded in the indigenous culture. Indeed, here we have to suspect the influence of written material on oral traditions. Nevertheless, the historian should search not only for the possible reasons for particular influences within a given context but also for their culture-historical implications. In other words, his attention should not be geared solely towards the Arabo-Muslim interpretations of pagan realities but also to their historical background.

Obviously, these considerations only make sense if it can be shown that core elements of the orally transmitted cultures derive from ancient civilisations known to us through their written records. Attention should therefore be focussed more particularly on religious elements which tend to change at a slower pace than other aspects of a culture. Hence, the investigation of the non-Muslim societies of the Guinea belt should be favored over the Muslim societies further north, where Islam has largely suppressed various expressions of pagan beliefs and with them the basic institutions of divine kingship. Nevertheless, it can be shown that even in those societies where Islam has been predominant for many centuries, important traces of the pre-Islamic political culture have survived. Mesopotamian influences subsist among Muslims in the form of traditions of origin and among pagans in the institutions of divine kingship and in myths. As an example of such influences in Muslim societies I will first consider the Kanta saga of Kebbi and then compare this with the Mesopotamian Sargon legend. With respect to pagan societies, I will examine the possibility of a relationship between the Shango priest-kings of West Africa and the priest-kings of Assyria and I will attempt to show that Shango and other Yoruba gods derive from the pantheon of the Syrian and Mesopotamian people.

Id., "How many times can history repeat itself? Some problems in the traditional history of Oyo", *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 18, 1 (1985), 40.

13 The Nimrod tradition of the Yoruba, which turns Oduduwa into a son of Nimrod who lived in Mecca, was recorded only by S. Johnson (*History of the Yorubas*, London, 1921, 3-4). Present-day Yoruba see the founding hero Oduduwa only in connection with the town of Ife. The Achipawa accept Nimrod as one of the founders of their petty kingdom, but they mention him only *inter alia* (Karetshin, April, 1993).

14 J. Lombard, *Structures de type féodal*, Paris, 1965, 89-95; M. H. Stewart, "The Kisra legend as oral history", *Journal of African Historical Studies*, 13, 1 (1980), 51-70.

15 H. R. Palmer, *Sudanese Memoirs*, Lagos, 1928, vol. II, 56-59.

2. Kanta and Sargon: Two Legendary Figures Compared

The Kanta saga of Kebbi tells the story of a young man, called Kanta, who was employed as a herdsman by a Fulani cattle herder. According to a prophecy revealed to the owner of the herd, a great destiny was promised to the person who ate the next-born calf of a specific pregnant cow and who fulfilled certain other conditions. More precisely, this person was destined to become "ruler of the world". Kanta paid heed to this revelation and, in the absence of his master, met the requirements. In consequence he became a great boxer, enlisted a large following and finally founded his own capital.[16]

The Kanta saga is held in great esteem among various ethnic groups within and beyond the present state of Kebbi (northwestern Nigeria) and in Ader (Niger). Three groups, each with their own version of the Kanta saga can be distinguished: royal and non-royal clans based on Argungu (the present-day capital of Kebbi), Muslim Fulani living near Surame (the late medieval capital of Kebbi), and the Hausa and Fulani inhabitants of Ader. With the exception of the rudimentary Kanta stories told in Ader, all versions of the Kanta saga point to an Arabian or Near Eastern origin. They clearly show that the "migration" from the east took place before the rise of Islam. However, opinions diverge with respect to the starting point of the "migration". The official version has Mecca as the original home of the ancestors[17], but other informants begin with Egypt. The learned Fulani versions claim that Kanta's father was a Jew or an Arab.[18]

Although the Ader stories have nothing to say about Kanta's origin, they clearly reveal the basic message of the saga, according to which Kanta was a "nobody" who rose to supreme power. Once established as a king, the hero continued to show extraordinary magical gifts: he instructed people to dig wells in the right places, he ordered them to smelt great quantities of iron ore and, quite miraculously, his granaries were always full.[19]

The Muslim Fulani of the Surame area have added a prestigious Islamic ancestry to the basic story of the "nobody" working for a cattle herder. According to them, Kanta's father was a pious pilgrim from Timbuktu or Futa Toro who on his way to Mecca stopped at Gande, the village of the Fulani cattle herder. He married a slave-girl, fathered Kanta, but had already continued on his pilgrimage when the boy was born.

The Argungu clans have also distorted the basic pattern of the story by providing Kanta with a noble ancestry. According to them, the hero's father was an in-law of the King of Katsina. The

16 A summary of the official version of the Kanta tradition is given by S. J. Hogben and A. H. M. Kirk-Greene, *The Emirates of Northern Nigeria*, London, 1966, 240-241.

17 P. G. Harris, *Sokoto Provincial Gazetteer*, Sokoto, 1938 (typescript), 230 and version of the Dankanawa.

18 The different versions of the Kanta saga will be part of a forthcoming study.

19 D. Hamani, *Contribution à l'étude de l'histoire des États hausa. L'Ader précolonial*, Niamey, 1975, 80-1.

young boy Kanta was given in custody to a Fulani cattle herder living in Gande. He stayed with the cattle herder because his parents died when he was still young. It can be shown that this version of the Kanta saga has been skillfully adjusted to the needs of the ruling Lekawa who came from Katsina and took power in Kebbi during the second half of the fifteenth century.[20] Although the other Argungu clans who cherish the Kanta story, the Lailabawa and the Dankanawa, must have been of local descent, they nowadays also claim that Kanta came from Katsina. Apparently they could not escape the political pressure in favour of the Lekawa version of the Kanta story.

Apart from the political colouring of the Kanta saga according to the area where it is told, it should be noted that the story of the young cattle herder who became "ruler of the world" has given rise to two different interpretations. In the state of Kebbi the saga has taken on an almost constitutional character as it is strongly emphasized that only descendants of Kanta can rule the country. Due to this, the exact genealogical relationship to Kanta is a matter of dispute between the two royal clans, the Lekawa and the Lailabawa, although the latter has been excluded from power for many centuries.[21]

Quite a different slant is given to the story by people who are hostile to the supposed descendants of Kanta. The Sokoto Fulani, for instance, stigmatize the cultural hero who was a "social nobody" by calling him a "slave of the Fulani".[22] One might have thought that the story itself was designed to embellish the original slave status of Kanta by changing it into a benevolent adoption.[23] In fact, it was probably the other way round: in all likelihood the adoption episode was one of the core elements of the original story and was erroneously interpreted as a way of concealing Kanta's slave status.

The search for the original form of the Kanta story and its historical basis has to begin with the attempt to identify the hero through his name. In this respect it should first be pointed out that various forms of the name Kanta have survived in West Africa in contexts of rulership and blacksmithing. In Medieval Mali the Keïta were preceded by rulers known as Soso or Kante who were considered to be blacksmiths.[24] Among the Mossi there are two loosely related clans of blacksmiths called Kane and Kinda.[25] Among the Akan we find the title

20 D. Lange, "Das frühe Kebbi und Mali: Versuch einer historischen Interpretation der Kanta-Traditionen", *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, 141, 1 (1991), 156-7.

21 Lange, "Das frühe Kebbi", 165-166.

22 Muhammad Bello, *Infāq al-maysūr* (transl. E. J. Arnett, *The Rise of the Sokoto Fulani*, Kano 1922, 13) and ᶜAbd al-Qādir b. al-Mustafā, *Rawdāt al-afkār* (transl. H.R. Palmer, "Western Sudan History: The Raudhāt ul Afkāri", *Journal of the Royal African Society*, 15 [1915-6], 263).

23 Lange, "Das frühe Kebbi", 161.

24 D. Lange, "Das alte Mali und Ghana: Der Beitrag der Oraltraditionen zur Kritik einer historiographischen Fiktion", *Historische Zeitschrift*, 255 (1992), 610-621.

25 A. Stössel, *Ritsyam. Geschichte und Gesellschaft eines Moose-Staates in Burkina Faso, Westafrika*, Wiesbaden, 1989, 281, 291.

Kontihene ("chief Konti") bestowed on a commander-in-chief.[26] Among the Yoruba the God of iron and war is called Ogun and his son Ogundahunsi (from Ogunda/Kanta ?).[27] In Ader the name Ikannawan designates the caste of Tuareg potters, while Kanta is the great culture hero.[28] These examples have been chosen because they reveal the existence of pairs in which the two items are distinguished only by the suffix *-te* or *-ta*. The same distinction can be noted for the Manding term *kana* or *kanda* nowadays meaning "war lord".[29] As Delafosse has pointed out, it is this term which has given rise to the name Ghana used by the Arabs in reference to the great West African kingdom known for its riches in gold.[30] This etymology is supported by Arab geographers who note that Ghana was also the title of the king.[31] Hence it would appear that *kana/Ghana* and *kanda/Kanta* are two forms of a royal epithet, which more particularly designates a king renowned for his knowledge of blacksmithing.

Bearing these elements in mind and taking into account the oriental origin claimed for Kanta, we may now turn our attention to the Mesopotamian ruler Sargon of Akkad who is the best candidate for identification with the West African Kanta. At first sight the name Sargon appears quite different from Kanta, but it should be remembered that Sargon was not the original but the adopted name of the founder of the first Mesopotamian empire. Furthermore, Sargon is not the Akkadian but the Hebrew form of the name known through the Old Testament. Akkadian texts call the ruler *šarru-kēnu* which means the "rightful (*kēnu*) king (*šarru*)".[32] It was precisely because Sargon was an usurper, that he chose to be called "rightful king" (which, according to the dynastic principle, he was not).[33] In fact, his personal name was unknown. Going one step further, it should be noted that the abstract form of *kīn* (rightful) is *kīnūtu* (faithfulness).[34] These two related forms are perhaps echoed in the West African pairs *kāna/kānda* and Ghāna/Kante.

26 I. Wilks, *Asante in the Nineteenth Century*, Cambridge, 1975, 728.

27 R. S. Smith, *Kingdoms of the Yoruba*, 3rd ed., London, 1988, 47. It has been suggested that Ogun was the god of foreign invaders (S.T. Barnes and P. G. Ben-Amos, "Ogun, the empire builder", *in*: S. T. Barnes (ed.), *Africa's Ogun*, Indiana, 1989, 29-38).

28 P. Bonte, "Esclavage et relation de dépendance chez les Touareg Kel Gress", *in*: Cl. Meillassoux (ed.), *L'esclavage en Afrique précoloniale*, Paris, 1975, 51.

29 M. Delafosse, *La langue mandingue*, vol. II, Paris, 1955, 241-242; s. a. Lange, "Altes Mali", 617.

30 Delafosse, *Mandingue*, II, 241.

31 J. Hopkins and N. Levtzion, *Corpus of Early Arabic Sources for West African History*, Cambridge, 1981, 52 (Ibn Hawqal), 79 (al-Bakrī).

32 B. Lewis, *The Legend of Sargon*, Ph.D., New York, 1976, 43-48.

33 W. v. Soden, "Sumer, Babylon und die Hethiter bis zur Mitte des zweiten Jahrtausends v. Chr.", *in*: G. Mann und A. Heuß (eds.), *Propyläen Weltgeschichte*, vol. I, Berlin, 1960, 547-9; C. J. Gadd, "The dynasty of Agade and the Gutian invasion", *in*: I. E. S. Edwards, *et al.* (eds.), *The Cambridge Ancient History*, vol. I, part 2, Cambridge, 1971, 417-421.

34 However, the name Kanta may also be derived from the Akkadian noun *kinūtu*, meaning - among other things - "a servant employed in the garden" (W. v. Soden, *Akkadisches Handwörterbuch*, vol. I, Wiesbaden, 1965, 480, 481).

From the available historical records it appears that Sargon (2414-2358) was first a cup-bearer of Ur-Zababa, one of the Semitic rulers of Kish.[35] His father was called La'ibum.[36] At some stage Sargon became independent of Ur-Zababa and founded Akkad, his own capital.[37] Later he fought against Lugalzaggisi, the king of Uruk, defeated and captured him.[38] Through further conquests he subdued the whole area between northern Syria, Susa (the Elamite capital) and the Persian Gulf. Akkadian, the language of the Semitic inhabitants of Mesopotamia, now supplanted Sumerian as the main written language. However, in spite of the foundation of an empire of unprecedented extent in which the Semites were for the first time the ruling elite, the rulers of Akkad continued to call themselves "kings of Kish (*šarr Kiš*)"[39], an epithet still cherished by the neo-Assyrian kings.[40] Assyriologists think that the somewhat enigmatic reference to Kish pays respect to the early rulers of Kish who formed the first postdiluvian dynasty.[41]

The impressive career of the empire builder Sargon of Akkad is reflected in the Sargon birth legend which, in its present form, may have been composed either in the fourteenth century or during the reign of Sargon II (722-705).[42] It depicts Sargon as the illegitimate son of a priestess, who was abandoned in a basket in the Euphrates. He was found by a water-drawer, Aqqi, who hoisted him out, brought him up and employed him as his gardener. When he had become a young man the goddess Istar fell in love with him and made him king.[43]

The comparison between the Kanta saga and the Sargon birth legend reveals a number of noteworthy similarities. Apart from the similar purport of the stories which in different environments turns a "nobody" into the "ruler of the world", the following parallel traits may be observed:[44]

35 Th. Jacobsen, *The Sumerian King List*, Chicago, 1939, 111.

36 Text of the Sargon-Lugalzaggisi episode *in*: H.-G. Güterbock, "Die historische Tradition und ihre literarische Gestaltung bei Babyloniern und Hethitern bis 1200", *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie*, 42 (1934), 37. Perhaps the name La'ibum is echoed in Lailabuwa.

37 Chronicle of Weidner, *in*: Güterbock, "Historische Tradition", 54-55.

38 Text of the Sargon-Lugalzaggesi episode *in*: Güterbock, "Historische Tradition", 38; inscription on a socle of a statue of Sargon *in*: H. Hirsch, "Die Inschriften der Könige von Agade", *Archiv für Orientforschung*, 20 (1963), 2; Lewis, *Legend of Sargon*, 136-7, 139-140.

39 Hirsch, "Inschriften", 2.

40 M.-J. Seux, *Épithètes royales akkadiennes et sumériennes*, Paris, 1967, 308-313; D. O. Edzard, "Kiš", *Reallexikon der Assyriologie*, V, 610.

41 W. W. Hallo, *Early Mesopotamian Royal Titles*, New Haven, 1957, 25; Edzard, "Kiš", *RLA*, V, 608.

42 Lewis, *Sargon Legend*, 187-191.

43 Pritchard, J. B., *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*, 3rd ed. Princeton, 1969, 119.

44 The rubrication is partly based on Lewis' comparison of four Exposed Hero Tales dealing with Ancient Oriental rulers (*Sargon*, 397).

	Sargon	Kanta
1. Mysterious origin	exposed and adopted	orphaned and adopted
2. Humble beginnings	gardener	cow herd
3. Divine favour	Ištar's lover	future ordained by prophecy
4. Court official	cupbearer[45]	(boxer)[46]
5. Divine vs. worldly power	refuses to reduce offering to Marduk[47]	betrays his master and fullfills the prophecy
6. Foundation of new capital	founds Akkad	founds Surame
7. "Ruler of the world"	šarr kiššati	sarki

It may be objected that similar stories were told about other historical or legendary figures like Krishna, Cyrus, Moses, Perseus, Romulus and Remus and many others.[48] However, some authors suppose that even in these cases we are dealing with variations derived from a common historical archetype.[49] Although the Sargon birth legend was recorded several centuries after the fall of the Akkadian dynasty it was certainly based on authentic written or oral tradition.[50] The most significant of these elements is the reference in the Sumerian king list to a date-grower related to Sargon before the latter became cupbearer of Ur-Zababa.[51] The king list can be dated to the beginning of the second millenium B.C. and it would appear that the date-grower and the legendary water-drawer Aqqi are identical.[52] But what happened to the king of Kish in the later traditions? If the Fulani cattle-owner of the Kanta story and the water-drawer Aqqi were one and the same then the sagas would be identical and both would have entirely omitted the Kish episode. However, Kanta's disobedience towards his master and his independent rise to power seem rather to suggest that the adoption and the court episode are merged in the Kanta saga.

45 Jacobsen, *King List*, 111.

46 The underlying common concept may have been the successful warlord.

47 Chronicle of Weidner *in*: Güterbock, "Historische Tradition", 54.

48 For a comparison of 71 tales of the hero who was exposed at birth being told from Iceland to China see Lewis, *Legend*, 218-310.

49 P. Jensen, "Aussetzungsgeschichten", *Reallexikon der Assyriologie*, I, 322-4; Lewis, *Legend*, 366.

50 Lewis, *Legend*, 382-3.

51 Jacobsen, *King List*, 111.

52 Jacobsen thinks that a written version of the Sargon birth legend was the source for the corresponding note in the king list (*King List*, 145-6), but this supposition is rejected by Lewis (*Legend*, 186).

The Kotoko of Gawi have a tradition of origin which apparently refers to the same historical event. The hero, called Dongo, was a slave of the Babalia king, who stole the royal herd and ran away from his master. He married an Arab woman, built his own fortified town and buried his own son in its wall.[53] In spite of having the name Dongo instead of Kanta this tradition apparently tells the same story as the Kanta saga but with one major difference: here we are not faced with the adoption motive but solely with the slave status of an adult hero. Hence, it is not the Sargon birth legend which gave rise to the tradition of Gawi, although it has the same historical background, e.g. the foundation of the Akkadian state by the disloyal courtier of the king of Kish. But in this case the royal master is the king of Babalia or Babylon, a town which was situated close to Kish and later supplanted it. Further it is suggested that the hero was closely allied with the Arabs, which is historically correct in the sense that Sargon certainly built his empire with the help of Semitic or, more precisely, desert nomads from Arabia. The tradition of Gawi therefore seems to reflect the rise of Sargon more closely than the legendary Sargon birth legend or the related Kanta story and hence it would appear to have been transmitted quite independently. A different line of transmission is also suggested by the name Dongo which, as will be seen, can be taken to be identical with Shango.

With respect to the titles mentioned in the Kanta saga it should be noted that the *Asalin Kabawa* and the official version distinguish between a minor title, Magaji, held by Kanta's father and a major title, Sarki, acquired by Kanta himself.[54] The feminine of Magaji is Magajiya, the royal epithet of the legendary queen of Daura[55] and the title given today to the women leaders of the Bori possession dance.[56] The term Magajiya has given rise to the quasi-ethnic name Maguzawa applied to the pagan Hausa of central Hausaland.[57] Magaji and Magajiya may be compared to the Akkadian terms *makhkhu* (masc.) and *makhkhutu* (fem.) which refer to particular priests and priestesses frequently possessed by their god.[58] Since the similarity between these terms involves form and meaning it is very likely that we are dealing with cognates.

Sarki, on the other hand, is most likely the abbreviated form of *šarr Kiš* (king of Kish).[59] That the second syllable of Sarki did not originally belong to the radical is shown by the Hausa

53 A.-M. Lebeuf, *Principautés kotoko*, Paris, 1969, 71.

54 For the *Asalin Kabawa* see Lange "Frühes Kebbi", 145 n. 26. According to this nineteenth century text Mohammadu Kanta rose from Magajin Makata to Sarkin Kebbi.

55 M.G. Smith, *The Affairs of Daura*, London, 1978, 53-54.

56 Frobenius, *Und Afrika*, II, 250.

57 The earlier suggested derivation from the Arabic *majūs* (Magian) would imply that the pagan Hausa adopted a name used by Muslim clerics.

58 E. Ebeling, "Besessenheit", *Reallexikon der Assyriologie*, II, 18; J. Renger, "Untersuchungen zum Priestertum der altbabylonischen Zeit. 2. Teil", *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie*, 59 (1969), 218-223.

59 The royal title *šarr kiššati* (king of the universe) is only attested for Assyria. It is a mistake to read the earlier *šarr Kiš* as *šarr kiššati* (Hallo, *Early Titles*, 23, 26). C. K. Meek suggested that *sarki* is derived from *šarr kiššati* (*The Northern Tribes of Nigeria*, I, London, 1925, 75 n. 1).

forms *sarauniya* (queen; Akk.: *šarratu*) and *sarauta* (power; Akk.: *šarrūtu*) which include the first syllable based on *šarr* (king) and omit the additional and somewhat superfluous mention of the town of Kish.[60] On the other hand we have the Borgu (Boko) and Songhay terms for "king", Ki and Koy, corresponding to the second syllable of *sar-ki* (cf. *Sor-ko*). According to the Sumerian king list, Kish was the first kingdom of Mesopotamia after the flood and it was from Kish that Sargon started his career as an empire builder.[61] As has been noted Sargon, his Akkadian successors and the Assyrian rulers, but also various other rulers of Babylon called themselves "kings of Kish".[62] It is not surprising that the Hausa did not use the ordinary *šarr* (any ruler)[63] but the prestigious *šarr Kiš/Ki* in reference to their kings. The final consonant of the name Kish may easily have been omitted at a time when the precise knowledge of the Mesopotamian heritage had been lost.

Even though the identification of Kanta with Sargon of Akkad may be surprising it has to be borne in mind that Hausa and a number of other languages of the Lake Chad area belong to the Afroasiatic language family. As such they are genetically related to Ancient Egyptian and Semitic of which Akkadian is the earliest written language. As yet, it has not been possible to establish the exact relationship between Chadic and Afroasiatic.[64] One of the reasons for this difficulty probably lies in the rudimentary state in which common Chadic has come down to us. However, if we look at a language such as Hausa, which is embedded in a rich cultural heritage and a continuous state tradition, we may find that significant cultural traits have survived until the present day. Similar traits may also have survived among ethnic groups like the Songhay and the Yoruba whose languages do not belong to Afroasiatic.

On the other hand, it should be observed that the identification of Kanta with Sargon of Akkad does not necessarily imply that people cherishing the saga moved into West Africa towards the end of the third millenium BC. In Mesopotamia the memory of the Akkadian state founder remained alive at least until the fall of the Assyrian empire (609 BC).[65] In fact, there are even good reasons to believe that the Sargon birth legend survived until the Persian occupation of Babylonia and maybe even until the great Arab expansion during the rise of Islam.[66]

60 R. C. Abraham, *Dictionary of the Hausa Language*, 2nd ed., London, 1962, 783, 785; Soden, *Handwörterbuch*, 1188, 1190.

61 Jacobsen, *King List*, 77-85, 111.

62 Edzard, "Kiš", *RLA*, V, 609-610.

63 M.-J. Seux, "Königtum", *Reallexikon der Assyriologie*, VI, 141.

64 H. Fleming considers that Berber is the closest Afroasiatic language to Chadic ("Chadic external relations", *in* E. Wolff and H. Meyer-Bahlburg (eds.), *Studies in Chadic and Afroasiatic Linguistics*, Hamburg, 1983, 22).

65 H. Lewy, "Assyria, c. 2600-1816 B.C.", *in*: *Cambridge Ancient History*, I, 2, Cambridge, 1971, 735-6; J.-R. Kuper, "Northern Mesopotamia and Syria", *in*: *Cambridge Ancient History*, II, 1, Cambridge, 1973, 6; Lewis, *Legend of Sargon*, 210-217.

66 Lewis, *Legend*, 231-2, 236-7.

Quite apart from these considerations, it should be noted that Mesopotamian cultural elements reached Egypt during the period of the Hyksos (1650-1540) and again during the period of the Assyrian occupation of the Nile valley (671-664).[67] Eduard Meyer supposed that for a brief period the hegemony of the Hyksos extended from Babylonia to Crete.[68] Another author suggested more recently that the founders of the Mycenaean civilisation were displaced Hyksos leaders from Egypt.[69] It is therefore quite conceivable that some of the Mesopotamian cultural elements noticed in the Niger-Chad region reached West Africa through Egypt during the middle of the second millenium B.C.[70] However, as far as the Kanta saga is concerned and the identification of its hero with the Semitic empire builder Sargon of Akkad, a later date for the arrival of Assyrian or Babylonian warrior groups attached to the Akkadian state tradition would be more likely.[71] In fact, the link between Kanta and iron, which is apparent from the saga and the Kante/Kinda autonym of groups of blacksmiths, suggests that the transfer of the Kanta saga to West Africa was related to the spread of iron technology, first to Egypt and later to West Africa.[72] Hence, either the brief Assyrian occupation of the Nile valley in the seventh century or the prolonged Persian occupation of Egypt (525-404) would appear to have provided various opportunities for Mesopotamian influences to reach distant areas in Africa.

3. Shango Priest-Kings

I will now turn to Shango, the royal ancestor of the Oyo-Yoruba and their god of thunder. His name can be equated with *šangú*, the Sumero-Akkadian designation for the high priests of individual cults and for the chief temple administrators.[73] In the Assyrian empire *šangú* became the title of the king and its abstract form, *šangûtu*, the general designation for the Assyrian kingship.[74] The Yoruba consider Shango as a royal ancestor of wild disposition who

67 W. G. Waddell, *Manetho*, London, 1940, 77-97; W. Helck, *Die Beziehungen Ägyptens zu Vorderasien im 3. und 2. Jt. v. Chr.*, 2nd. edn., Wiesbaden, 1971, 89-94, 100-106; M. Bietak, "Hyksos", *Lexikon der Ägyptologie*, III, 94-110; H. v. Zeissl, *Äthiopen und Assyrer in Ägypten*, 2nd edn. Glückstadt, 1955, 35-46.

68 E. Meyer, *Geschichte des Altertums*, II, 1, 3. Ausg., Darmstadt, 1953, 43-44.

69 F. H. Stubbings, "The rise of the Mycenaean civilization", *in: Cambridge Ancient History*, II, 1, 633-638.

70 R. Stadelmann, *Syrisch-palästinensische Gottheiten in Ägypten*, Leiden, 1967, 14-20.

71 D. Lange, "Hausa-Traditionen", 71-72.

72 On the beginning of iron working in the Nile Valley see P. L. Shinnie and P. J. Kense, "Meroitic iron working", *Meroitica* 6 (1982), 19-21.

73 Soden, *Handwörterbuch*, 1163; J. A. Brinkman *et al.* (eds.), *The Assyrian Dictionary*, vol. 17, I, Chicago, 1989, 377-382.

74 P. Garelli and V. Nikiprowetzky, *Le Proche-Orient asiatique: Les empires mésopotamiens, Israël*, Paris, 1974, 129, 177, 236-237; *Chicago Assyrian Dictionary*, 17, I, 382-384.

fought many wars, committed suicide, disappeared into the earth and later took up his abode in heaven whence he threatens to throw deadly thunderbolts.[75]

Other West African people have also preserved the memory of a mythical ancestor or an ancestral god bearing a similar name, for instance the ancestor of the kings of Gao-Sané called Zaghe, whose name can be read as Sangu due to the throne names Yama Dunku and Hizka Zunku Dam preserved in the Gao king list.[76] The Jukun have a founding hero or god called Kenjo who, similarly to the Shango of the Yoruba, is considered to be in control of lightning and rain.[77] The Mossi venerate the severe and terrifying earth-god Tenga who punishes the perjurers.[78] In Hausa mythology Jangare is the father of all the Bori gods who lives in an invisible eastern town bearing the same name.[79] The Shangawa of southern Kebbi claim descent from an ancestor called Shanga Huga who was ousted from power in Kebbi by his younger brother Kanta.[80] In the Gawi tradition of origin already mentioned the founding hero is called Dongo, although the circumstances of his rise recall the Kanta saga and the foundation of Akkad. In the same line of thought it may perhaps be supposed that the move of the royal residence from Oko (Kish?) to Oyo, which the Yoruba tradition of origin attributes to Shango, also refers to the foundation of the Akkadian empire by Sargon.[81] If we accept that Shango initially designated the personified Assyrian priest-kings and their Akkadian state tradition then it is not difficult to understand why the ancestral figures Shango/Dongo and Kanta are connected with largely identical traditions of origin.

As examples for ancestral or mythological hometowns with names derived from an Assyrian royal title, we may mention Jangare, the invisible city of the Bori gods[82], Sango, the original town of the Jukun or Kwororafa, and Tunga, whence the Dagomba claim to have originated.[83] Invariably these towns are said to lie in the east or, sometimes, the northeast (Jukun). It would appear that in each case the original reference is to the Mesopotamian residence of a powerful priest-king known by his religious title *šangú* (priest).

75 A. B. Ellis, *The Yoruba-Speaking Peoples*, London, 1894, 46-56; Frobenius, *Und Afrika*, II, 230-238; Johnson, *History*, 34-36, 149-152.

76 D. Lange, "From Mande de Songhay. Towards a political and ethnic history of medieval Gao", *Journal of African History*, 35, 2 (1994) 290.

77 C. K. Meek, *A Sudanese Kingdom*, London, 1931, 36, 265-7.

78 L. Tauxier, *Le Noir du Yatenga*, Paris, 1917, 376-7.

79 L. Frobenius, *Dämonen des Sudan*, Jena, 1924, 347-350; J. Greenberg, *The Influence of Islam on a Sudanese Religion*, Seattle, 1946, 28-29.

80 I owe this information to Richard Kuba who recorded the tradition of origin of the Shangawa in January 1994.

81 Johnson, *History*, 12, 144, 150.

82 *Vide supra* n. 81.

83 H. R. Palmer, "Notes of the Kordofawa and Jukoh", *Journal of the African Society*, 11, (1911-12), 402; D. Westermann, *Geschichte Afrikas*, Köln, 1952, 178. I am grateful to Peter Rusch for information on the Jukun.

Elsewhere in West African we find royal epithets resembling the Assyrian royal title. In ancient Ghana it was *Tunka*, as we know from the name *Tunkā* Manīn recorded by al-Bakrī, and the present Soninke title *Tunka*.[84] In medieval Gao it was *Dunka*, as is evidenced by the surviving title of the the royal bards, *Jesere Dunka*[85], which refers to the king by the first and the second term - *jesere* being derived from Akkadian *ša šarri* - 'man of the king'. In Borno apparently we find the form *Tsongo-rina* in praise songs to the kings and in Darfūr Nachtigal noted that the king was referred to as *Donga*.[86]

Furthermore, there are a number of ethnonyms which, on account of their form and of the corresponding traditions of origin, would appear to be related to the same Assyrian title. The name Songhay, which is made up by the root *šangū* and the Songhay plural marker *-ey* means the "people of Shango".[87] The name Zaghāwa, given by Arab geographers to the people of the Lake Chad area, has the same meaning considering that parallel to the term Zaghāy it is composed of the root Zaghe/a/u and the Saharan plural marker *-wa/-a*.[88] The corresponding traditions of origin both refer to Yemen (i.e. originally to the god Yamm), and the Borno and Hausa traditions refer more particularly to Baghdad, i.e. Babylon or Kish.[89] The name Wasangari, given to the Borgu aristocracy, may be understood as another derivation of *šangū* considering the Kisra tradition of origin; traditional and modern scholars alike have related this to the Sassanids but it more likely refers to the Ancient Orient.[90] Another example is provided by the ethnonym Shangawa derived from the royal title and the name of the capital of the ethnic group concerned.

Although it will be difficult to establish under which circumstances the Sumero-Akkadian designation *šangū* gave rise to particular ethnonyms there can be hardly any doubt that, originally, the people concerned considered themselves as "people of the *šangū* priest-king". As such they would appear to have been faithful to a tradition of sacred kingship derived from the neo-Assyrian state.

84 *Corpus*, 79; E. Pollet and G. Winter, *La société soninké*, Bruxelles, 1971, 38.

85 J.-P. Olivier de Sardan, *Concepts et conceptions songhay-zarma*, Paris, 1981, 225.

86 J. R. Patterson, *Kanuri Songs*, Lagos, 1926, 1, 6, 11, 14, 17, 23; G. Nachtigal, *Sahara und Sudan*, vol. III, Leipzig, 1889, 343.

87 Lange, "From Mandé", 290.

88 *Ibid.*

89 Or more precisely: it stands for Babylon (Lange, "Hausa-Traditionen", 53, 67, 69) but means Kish.

90 Frobenius, *Und Afrika*, II, 335-344; Palmer, *Sudanese Memoirs*, II, 61; Fage, *History*, 63-65. The Kisra of the Wasangari could be identical with the premordial divinity Kishar of the *Enūma eliš* (Pritchard, *ANET*, 61) or with *Kōthar wa-Khasīs* (*ibid.*, 129-141).

4. Shango and Baal in their Mythological Context

Now to the religious meaning of the Shango concept. We have noted that in Yoruba it designates the god of thunder.[91] He punishes human beings with red-hot chains of iron transformed into thunderbolts. He is married to his sister and dwells in the clouds in an immense opulent palace, where he maintains a large retinue and keeps a great number of horses. Shango is generally represented armed with a double-axe called *oše* and a rattle called *šere*.[92] The Songhay worship a similar god called Dongo who is the 'master of heaven' and whose emblem of power is also an axe (*dongo dāši*).[93] Both are powerful sky-gods who kill the guilty and send rain to the good. As gods of thunder and lightning they throw chains of iron or thunderbolts forged in the form of an axe.[94] On special occasions they manifest themselves by taking possession of individual adepts; then the possessed seizes the axe of the priests and dances while holding the axe in one of his hands.[95] The Achipawa who live in a region of difficult access between Hausaland and the country of the Yoruba worship a god of rain and fertility called Tongo. They believe that Tongo was forced out of Mecca by the Muslims and that he died in their present country.[96] In all three cases Shango is a god of fertility, but among the Yoruba and the Songhay he is more particularly a weather god, the lord of storm, lightning and thunder.

The features mentioned suggest that Shango is related to Baal or Adad, the great weather god of the Semites. This impression is supported by iconographic elements which often represent Baal carrying an axe (Akk. *pāšu*) in one hand and a lance in the other.[97] The Yoruba and Songhay terms for axe, *oše* and *dāši*, are derived from Akkadian *pāšu*, an intermediate form being the Igbirra *base*. Further parallels concern Baal's position as the lord of heaven and the king of the gods, his palace in heaven, his marriage with his sister Anat/Ištar (Oya), his fight with Yamm (Olukun) and his death followed by his descent to the nether world and later resurrection.[98] The major difference between the two gods which needs explanation is their name.

91 Ellis, *The Yoruba-Speaking*, 47.

92 *Ibid.*, 47-49.

93 J. Rouch, *La religion et la magie songhay*, Paris, 1960, 68-69, 161-2.

94 Ellis, *Yoruba-speaking*, 47; Rouch, *Religion*, 69.

95 Frobenius, *Und Afrika sprach I Band. Auf den Trümmern des klassischen Atlantis*, Berlin, 1932, 240; Rouch, *Religion*, 161-2. P. R. McKenzie notes that the axe is laid on the back of the possessed ("Shango - a traditional Yoruba cult-group", *Africana Marburgensia*, 9, 1 [1976], 20).

96 Wombido, Kaneshin, 6/4/1993.

97 O. Eissfeld, "Kanaanäisch-ugaritische Religion", in: B. Spuler, ed., *Handbuch der Orientalistik*, 1. Abt., 8. Bd., 1. Abschn., Leiden, 1964, 83.

98 M. H. Pope and W. Röllig, "Syrien: Die Mythologie der Ugariter und Phönizier", in: H. W. Haussig, ed., *Wörterbuch der Mythologie*, 1. Abt., Bd. 1, Stuttgart, 1965, 253-264. As far as these features refer to Baal's/Shango's relations with other gods they will be explained below.

But first, attention should be directed to an earlier West African weather-god associated with divine kingship whose connections with the Ancient Orient are more direct. This god is known by the name Dodo which would appear to be derived from Adad. The non-Islamic Hausa of Gobir consider him to be a god of thunder who is able to summon the rainy season.[99] Similarly the Abakwariga of Wukari have a god of a possession cult known as Dodo Agashi or Raka Dodo who is believed to have once been the personal god of the kings of Kano.[100] An earlier close association between the Hausa kings and Adad/Dodo is still perceptible from the praise songs calling the king "great Dodo".[101] The same identification of the king with the Semitic weather god is attested for the Egyptian Pharaoh who was addressed as "my Baal, my Addu", Addu standing for Adad.[102] In the Niger-Chad region the name Adad/Dodo occurs prominently among the Dass of the Plateau area where it is applied to collective ancestors who continue to interfere with the living in a disruptive way.[103] The Achipawa, on the other hand, call the royal clan of Kareshin Odondo, while the royal clan of Kadedan is given the name Olo (Sem. *ilu* - god).[104] The name Adad can also be recognized in Oduduwa, the father of the seven or sixteen original Yoruba kings. However, since Oduduwa no longer has the traits of a weather god it must be assumed that he has ceded them to the younger god Shango.

Keeping the distinction between the earlier weather-god Oduduwa and the later weather-god Shango in mind it may now be stipulated that in West Africa the personified Assyrian king was first venerated as a royal ancestor. It was only at a later stage, when he had become deified, that he was given the traits of the great Semitic weather god. Consequently Adad/Oduduwa kept his primacy in the Yoruba pantheon as either a remote ancestral god or as a goddess of love.[105] In the former we may recognize the attributes of the old Mesopotamian weather-god Enlil, displaced by Adad, whose function was to install worldly rulers[106], and in the latter Ištar/Astarte, the goddess of war and love.[107]

Other parallels between the Semitic and the Yoruba pantheon concern El/Olorun, Šala/Oshalla-Obatala, Aya/Oya and Yamm/Yemoya. In each case the name of the divinity has

99 G. Nicolas, *Dynamique sociale et appréhension du monde au sein d'une société haoussa*, Paris, 1975, 227, 235. At present the Hausa generally conceive of Dodo as an evil spirit.

100 Frobenius, *Dämonen*, 320-322.

101 P. Krusius, "Die Maguzawa", *Archiv für Anthropologie* 42 (1915), 292.

102 Pope and Röllig, "Syrien", 253.

103 F. P. Conant, *Dodo of Dass: A Study of a Pagan Religion of Northern Nigeria*, Columbia University, Ph. D. 1960, 2, 46-7, 263.

104 A.B. Mathews, *Historical and anthropological report of the Achifawa*, Kaduna National Archives /SNP/17/8/K.2068 from 1926, f. 2.

105 Ellis, *Yoruba-Speaking*, 41-43.

106 Johnson, *History*, 3; Frobenius, *Und Afrika*, I, 207; D. O. Edzard, "Mesopotamien: die Mythologie der Sumerer und Akkader", in: H. W. Haussig (ed.), *Wörterbuch der Mythologie*, Stuttgart, 1965, 60.

107 Haussig, *Wörterbuch*, 81-89, 250-252.

to be distinguished from its particular features. Olorun, the high god of the Yoruba occupies a position similar to that of El (*ilu*), the supreme god of the Semites: both are remote gods (*dei otiosi*) who live in heaven.[108] The name Olorun is composed of *olu-wa* ('possessor' from Sem. *ilu* - god) and *orun* (sky). Both forms, *ilu* and *olu*, have given rise among the Semites and the Yoruba to many theophoric names.[109]

Let us next turn to Obatala, the great sky-god of the Yoruba and husband of the goddess Oduduwa. In Ife, the holy city of the Yoruba, and among the Ekiti he is known respectively as Oshalla and Ossala.[110] This name may be compared to the name Šala which designates the wife of the Akkadian weather-god Adad.[111] In the couple Oduduwa - Oshalla/Obatala we therefore have precisely the nomenclature of the Akkadian couple Adad - Šala but with inverted sexes. The difference of the sexes is not significant since both Oduduwa and Oshalla/Obatala are equally masculine and feminine.[112] Also, Frobenius specifically noted that the sexes of the sky-god (Oshalla) and the earth-goddess (Oduduwa) are sometimes inverted.[113] Moreover, it is Oshalla who stands for maternity, not Oduduwa.

Now to Oya, the principal wife of Shango. As noted above, among the Yoruba the Akkadian thundergod Adad has been displaced by the younger god Shango. We have just noted that the Akkadian wife of the thundergod has stayed with her husband. Hence it is clear that Oya, like her husband Shango, must have been a newcomer. What might have been her earlier position in the Semitic pantheon? On the basis of her name it may be suggested that she was identical with Aya, the wife of the sun-god Šamaš.[114] A further argument for this identification is provided by a myth which relates the flight of Oya and subsequent pursuit by her husband. Both available versions of the myth specify that Shango followed his wife, hidden behind the sun and taking the same course all day, from his rise in the east to his setting at the place where the sea and the sky join.[115] Since Shango behaves like the sun in this important myth, it may be assumed that certain traits of the sun-god Šamaš were transferred to him and, in particular, that he was given Šamaš' wife Aya.

Finally, we have to deal with Yamm and Yemoya. Yamm is the fierce ocean-god of the Ugaritic mythology and as such he is identical with the Tiâmat of the *Enûma eliš* (the creation

108 Pope and Röllig, "Syrien", 279-283; G. Parrinder, *Religion in an African City*, London, 1953, 7-11.

109 Pope and Röllig, "Syrien", 279-283; R. Hallgren, *The Good Things in Life*, Löberöd, 1988, 161.

110 Frobenius, *Und Afrika*, I, 207; C. L. Temple, *Notes on the Tribes of Northern Nigeria*, Lagos, 1922, 105, 382.

111 Edzard, "Mesopotamien", 118, 136.

112 For a goddess Obatala/Orishalla see R. E. Dennett, *Nigerian Studies*, London, 1910, 81 who quotes S. Crowther (1852). For Oduduwa representing Ištar see above.

113 *Und Afrika*, I, 207.

114 Edzard, "Mesopotamien", 39.

115 Frobenius, *Und Afrika*, II, 231; Ellis, *Yoruba-Speaking*, 54.

epic). Both names, Yamm and Tiāmat, also designate the sea. In Yoruba mythology the ocean-god is called Olukun (*olu/ilu* - master, god; *kun* - sea). However, it is not Olukun who has the specific traits of Yamm/Tiāmat but Yemoya. Nevertheless Yemoya is the goddess of brooks and streams, and priests consider her to represent water.[116] In the *Enūma eliš* the god Marduk splits Tiāmat into two halves, from which he created the heaven with its stars and the earth with its animals and plants.[117] According to Yoruba mythology Yemoya was first ravished by her son Orungan and then persecuted by him. Yemoya then fell to the ground and her body began to swell enormously and burst open. From it originated fifteen major gods, including Ogun and Shango.[118] Because of her name and the similarity to the corresponding myths of creation it seems that Yemoya is largely identical with Yamm/Tiāmat. In her case the myth relates the creation of the gods and in the case of Tiāmat it relates the creation of both the gods and the universe.

Conclusion

The above-mentioned comparisons suggest that important elements of the Near Eastern cultures were introduced into West Africa during the pre-Christian area. Both the Kanta legend and the cult of Shango contribute to the legitimation of political power to the present day. They belong to a cultural context of which various other elements may also be related to the Ancient Orient. They cannot be considered isolated additions, which were inserted into a system already *en place* in medieval times, and they certainly did not result from modern feed-back. It is therefore difficult to avoid the conclusion that the traditions of genesis in the Niger-Chad region which point to an origin in the Ancient Orient are basically valid.

Tentatively three types of Arabo-Islamic reinterpretations of authentic material can be distinguished: first, the similarity of names lead local Muslim scholars to adopt an Arabic name instead of a similar-sounding African name with a different meaning (the historical Kisra/Khusraw instead of the mythological Kishar (or Kōthar), the land Yemen instead of the god Yamm); second, the geographical proximity induced local scholars to substitute one name for another (Baghdad instead of Kish, Mecca instead of the Assyrian capital); third, old elements of indigenous traditions were converted into a concept familiar to Muslims on account of a realistic - albeit very approximate - evaluation of the cultural background (Nimrod instead of the divine father of Adad/Oduduwa; Arabs instead of Semites). On the basis of these considerations there would appear to be an urgent need to pursue the line of research indicated by the promoters of the Sudanic State theory. However, going one step further, the historian should neither restrict his attention to the Nile valley, nor should he overstress the importance of the civilisations which immediately preceded Islam. In fact, there are sufficient reasons to believe that the threads provided by African history lead to the earliest history of mankind.

116 Ellis, *Yoruba-speaking*, 44, 86.

117 Edzard, "Mesopotamien", 122-3, 129; Pope, Röllig, "Syrien", 258-260; B. Meissner, *Babylonien und Assyrien*, I, Heidelberg, 1925, 103-107.

118 Ellis, *Yoruba-speaking*, 44-5. With respect to Ogun it should be noted that in Ire, the Eketi centre of the Ogun cult, the god is said to have disappeared into the earth (P. Verger, *Notes sur le culte des orisha et vodun*, Dakar, 1957, 142) - like Shango and Baal. This parallel supports the tentative identification of Ogun with Kasta/Sargon, the founder of the Assyrian state tradition.

Bibliography

Abraham, R.C. (1962). *Dictionary of the Hausa Language*. London.

Adams, W.Y. (1977). *Nubia Corridor to Africa*. London.

Arnett, E.J. (1922). *The Rise of the Sokoto Fulani*. Kano.

Barnes, S.T./ Ben-Amos, P.G. (1989) Ogun, the empire builder. Barnes, S.T. (ed.): *Africa's Ogun*. Indiana: 29-38.

Baumann, H. et al. (1939). *Völkerkunde von Afrika*. Essen.

Bietak, M. (1980). Hyksos. *Lexikon der Ägyptologie*, III: 94-110.

Bonte, P. (1975). Esclavage et relation de dépendance chez les Touareg Kel Gress. Meillassoux, Cl. (ed.). *L'esclavage en Afrique précoloniale*. Paris: 49-76.

Brinkman, J.A. et al. (eds.) (1989). *The Assyrian Dictionary*, 17/1. Chicago.

Conant, F.P. (1960). *Dodo of Dass A Study of a Pagan Religion of Northern Nigeria*. Columbia University (PhD thesis).

Delafosse, M. (1955). *La langue mandingue*, II. Paris.

Dennett, R.E. (1910) *Nigerian Studies*. London.

Dittmer, K. (1967). Afrika südlich der Sahara. Dittmer, K. et al. (eds.): *Saeculum Weltgeschichte*, IV. Freiburg: 585-635.

Ebeling, E. (1938) Besessenheit. *Reallexikon der Assyriologie*, II: 18.

Edzard, D.O. (1965). Mesopotamien: die Mythologie der Sumerer und Akkader. Haussig, H.W. (ed.): *Wörterbuch der Mythologie*. Stuttgart: 17-140.

Edzard, D.O. (1976). Kiš. *Reallexikon der Assyriologie*, V: 607-613.

Eissfeld, O. (1964). Kanaanäisch-ugaritische Religion. Otto, E. et al. (eds.): *Handbuch der Orientalistik*. Leiden: 76-91.

Ellis, A.B. (1894). *The Yoruba-Speaking Peoples*. London.

Fage, J.D. (1978). *A History of Africa*. London.

Fleming, H. (1983). Chadic external relations. Wolff, E./ Meyer-Bahlburg, H. (eds.): *Studies in Chadic and Afroasiatic Linguistics*. Hamburg: 17-31.

Frobenius, L. (1912). *Und Afrika sprach, I: Auf den Trümmern des klassischen Atlantis*. Berlin.

Frobenius, L. (1912). *Und Afrika sprach, II: An der Schwelle des verehrungswürdigen Byzanz*. Berlin.

Frobenius, L. (1924). *Dämonen des Sudan*. Jena.

Gadd, C.J. (1971). The dynasty of Agade and the Gutian invasion. Edwards, I.E.S. et al. (eds.): *The Cambridge Ancient History*, I/2. Cambridge: 417-463.

Garelli, P./ Nikiprowetzky, V. (1974). *Le Proche-Orient asiatique: Les empires mésopotamiens, Israël*. Paris.

Greenberg, J. (1946). *The Influence of Islam on a Sudanese Religion*. Seattle.

Güterbock, H.-G. (1934). Die historische Tradition und ihre literarische Gestaltung bei Babyloniern und Hethitern bis 1200. *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie*, 42: 1-91.

Hallgren, R. (1988). *The Good Things in Life*. Löberöd.

Hallo, W.W. (1957). *Early Mesopotamian Royal Titles*. New Haven.

Hamani, D. (1975). *Contribution à l'étude de l'histoire des États hausa: L'Ader précolonial*. Niamey.

Harris, P.G. (1938). *Sokoto Provincial Gazetteer*. Typescript. Sokoto.

Helck, W. (1971). *Die Beziehungen Ägyptens zu Vorderasien im 3. und 2. Jt. v. Chr.*. Wiesbaden.

Hirsch, H. (1963). Die Inschriften der Könige von Agade. *Archiv für Orientforschung*, 20: 1-33.

Hogben, S.J./ Kirk-Greene, A.H.M. (1966). *The Emirates of Northern Nigeria*. London.

Hopkins, J/ Levtzion, N. (1981). *Corpus of Early Arabic Sources for West African History*. Cambridge.

Jacobsen, Th. (1939). *The Sumerian King List*. Chicago.

Jensen, P.(1932). Aussetzungsgeschichten. *Reallexikon der Assyriologie*, I: 322-324.

Johnson, S. (1921). *History of the Yorubas*. London.

Krusius, P. (1915). Die Maguzawa. *Archiv für Anthropologie*, 42: 288-315.

Kuper, J.-R. (1973). Northern Mesopotamia and Syria. *Cambridge Ancient History*, II/1. Cambridge: 1-41.

Lange, D. (1991). Das frühe Kebbi und Mali: Versuch einer historischen Interpretation der Kanta-Traditionen. *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, 141/1: 139-166.

Lange, D. (1992). Das alte Mali und Ghana: Der Beitrag der Oraltraditionen zur Kritik einer historiographischen Fiktion. *Historische Zeitschrift*, 255: 587-623.

Lange, D. (1993). Hausa-Traditionen in ihrer Abhängigkeit von Kanem-Borno und Nubien. *Anthropos*, 88: 47-76.

Lange, D. (1994). From Mande de Songhay: Towards a political and ethnic history of medieval Gao. *Journal of African History*, 35/2: 275-301.

Law, R. (1977). *The Oyo Empire c. 1600 - c. 1836*. Oxford, 1977.

Law, R. (1985). How many times can history repeat itself? Some problems in the traditional history of Oyo. *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 18/1: 33-51.

Lebeuf, A.-M. (1969). *Principautés kotoko*. Paris.

Lewis, B. (1976). *The Legend of Sargon*. New York (PhD thesis).

Lewy, H. (1971). Assyria, c. 2600-1816 B.C. *Cambridge Ancient History*, I/2. Cambridge: 729-770.

Lombard, J. (1965). *Structures de type féodal*. Paris.

Mathews, A.B. (1926). *Historical and anthropological report of the Achifawa*. Kaduna National Archives /SNP/17/8/K.2068.

Mauny, R. (1970). *Les siècles obscurs de l'Afrique Noire*. Paris.

McKenzie, P.R. (1976). Shango - a traditional Yoruba cult-group. *Africana Marburgensia*, 9/1: 3-33.

Meek, C.K. (1925). *The Northern Tribes of Nigeria*, I. London.

Meek, C.K. (1931). *A Sudanese Kingdom*. London.

Meissner, B. (1925). *Babylonien und Assyrien*, I. Heidelberg.

Meyer, E. (1953). *Geschichte des Altertums*, II/1. Darmstadt.

Nachtigal, G. (1889). *Sahara und Sudan*, III. Leipzig.

Nicolas, G. (1975). *Dynamique sociale et appréhension du monde au sein d'une société hausa*. Paris.

Oliver, R./ J. Fage, J. (1988). *A Short History of Africa*. First ed. 1962. London.

Oliver, R. (1991). *The African Experience*. London.

Olivier de Sardan, J.-P. (1981). *Concepts et conceptions songhay-zarma*. Paris.

Palmer, H.R. (1911-1912). Notes of the Korôrofawa and Jukoñ. *Journal of the African Society*, 11: 401-415.

Palmer, H.R. (1915-1916). Western Sudan History: The Raudhât ul Afkâri. *Journal of the Royal African Society*, 261-273.

Palmer, H.R. (1928). *Sudanese Memoirs*, II. Lagos.

Parrinder, G. (1953). *Religion in an African City*. London.

Patterson, J.R. (1926). *Kanuri Songs*. Lagos.

Pollet, E./ Winter, G. (1971). *La société soninké*. Bruxelles.

Pope, M.H. / Röllig, W. (1965). Syrien: Die Mythologie der Ugariter und Phönizier. Haussig, H.W. (ed.): *Wörterbuch der Mythologie*, I. Stuttgart: 217-312.

Pritchard, J.B. (1969). *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*. Princeton.

Renger, J. (1969). Untersuchungen zum Priestertum der altbabylonischen Zeit, 2. *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie*, 59: 104-230.

Rouch, J. (1960). *La religion et la magie songhay*. Paris.

Seux, M.-J. (1967). *Épithètes royales akkadiennes et sumériennes*. Paris.

Seux, M.-J.(1980). Königtum. *Reallexikon der Assyriologie*, VI: 140-173.

Shaw, Th. (1985). The prehistory of West Africa. Ajayi, J./ Crowder, M. (eds.): *History of West Africa*, I. Harlow: 48-86.

Shinnie, P.L./ Kense, F.J. (1982). Meroitic iron working. *Meroitica*, 6: 17-28.

Smith, M.G. (1978). *The Affairs of Daura*. London.

Smith, R.S. (1988). *Kingdoms of the Yoruba*. London.

Soden, W. v. (1960). Sumer, Babylon und die Hethiter bis zur Mitte des zweiten Jahrtausends v. Chr.. Mann, G/ Heuß, A. (eds.): *Propyläen Weltgeschichte*, I. Berlin: 523-612.

Soden, W. v. (1965). *Akkadisches Handwörterbuch*, I. Wiesbaden, 1965.

Stadelmann, R. (1967). *Syrisch-palästinensische Gottheiten in Ägypten*. Leiden.

Stevens, Ph. (1975). The Kisra legends and the distortion of historical traditions. *Journal of African History*, 16/2: 189-200.

Stewart, M.H. (1980). The Kisra legend as oral history. *Journal of African Historical Studies*, 13/1: 51-70.

Stössel, A. (1989). *Riisyam. Geschichte und Gesellschaft eines Moose-Staates in Burkina Faso, Westafrika*. Wiesbaden.

Stubbings, F.H. (1973).The rise of the Mycenaean civilization. *Cambridge Ancient History*, II/1: 627-658.

Tauxier, L. (1917). *Le Noir du Yatenga*. Paris.

Temple, C.L. (1922). *Notes on the Tribes of Northern Nigeria*. Lagos.

Ullendorf, E. (1973). *The Ethiopians*. London.

Vansina, J. (1978). The roots of African cultures. Curtin, Ph. et al. (eds.): *African History*. Harlow: 1-37.

Verger, P. (1957). *Notes sur le culte des orisha et vodun*. Dakar.

Waddell, W.G. (1940). *Manetho*. London.

Westermann, D. (1952). *Geschichte Afrikas*. Köln.

Wilks, I. (1975). *Asante in the Nineteenth Century*. Cambridge.

Zeissl, H. v. (1955). *Äthiopen und Assyrer in Ägypten*. Glückstadt.

Zibelius-Chen, K. (1988). *Die ägyptische Expansion nach Nubien*. Wiesbaden.

THE DYING AND RISING GOD IN THE NEW YEAR FESTIVAL OF IFE

There was a time when the Yoruba were generally thought to have originated outside of sub-Saharan Africa. Some authors favoured Canaan and Arabia as the starting point of a great migration,[1] others North Africa and Egypt.[2] In view of the unlikeliness of a large scale movement of people – whether by land or sea – over these long distances, such theories are no longer taken into consideration.

Following a general trend in post-colonial African history in favour of local developments, historians of the Yoruba now prefer to search for regional closely circumscribed origins.[3] This position seems all the more valid since the neigbouring people in the north, the Bariba, Nupe, Hausa, and Kanuri, were thought to have no comparable claims of northern connections. Why should the Yoruba alone have migrated over a long distance while their neighbours have stayed for hundreds or even thousands of years in their homelands without major residential changes? We have seen above that this was not the case. Even though the concept of large scale migration has to be rejected, the evidence for far-reaching contacts with the north in ancient times is, with respect to the Hausa and the Kanuri, too obvious to be neglected.[4]

The Yoruba legend of origin traces the starting point of the great migration to Arabia. Indeed, the culture hero of the Yoruba, Oduduwa, is said to have originally lived as a crown prince together with his father Nimrod in Mecca. There he tried with the help of his priest Azar to reverse the religious situation by reintroducing idol worship. However, Abraham, the son of Azar, agitated in favour of Islam and destroyed the idols.[5] When the people were about to burn Abraham, the Muslims revolted so that Oduduwa and his supporters had to flee.[6] Nearly all the details of the story including the particular name of Abraham's father and the destruction of the idols can be shown to have been borrowed from the Koran

[1] Johnson, *History*, 3-5; Frobenius, *Götterlehre*, X-XVI, 8-10.
[2] Frobenius, *Und Afrika*, 323-351; Lucas, *Religion*, 352-354.
[3] Smith, *Kingdom*, 4-6; Law, *Oyo Empire*, 26-30.
[4] See above pp. 229, 233-254, 277-287.
[5] The Koran mentions Azar instead of Terah as the father of Abraham (Gen 11: 26; Kor. 6: 74).
[6] Johnson, *History*, 3-5. See also Law, "How many times", 39-40.

and from Islamic Tales of the Prophets.[7] However, why was Oduduwa as a son of Nimrod so cogently inserted into the story of Abraham's struggle against idolatry? Later his son Oranmiyan is, in a similar vein, supposed to have attempted to return to Mecca in order to reconquer the town. The great collector of Yoruba traditions Johnson himself cannot possibly be credited with such reconstructions since he clearly states that he relied on oral accounts which he heard. Further to the north the Fulani scholar and later Sultan of Sokoto Muḥammad Bello was acquainted with a similar story according to which the Yoruba were remnants of the Canaanites and hence kinsfolk of Nimrod.[8] These elements of Yoruba history interwoven with Islamic feedback are certainly based on old traditions transmitted via the milieu of Muslim traders residing among the Hausa and in northern Yorubaland. Although the details about Mecca and Islam are certainly not based on historical events, the general link they establish between certain biblical figures and the Yoruba culture heros cannot be dismissed as mere fabrications for the sole purpose of constructing ■ prestigious ancestry without any foundation in ancient history.[9] Owing to the reorientation of trade towards the coast and hence the disruption of contacts with the north in the colonial period, later authors could no longer avail themselves of similar informants.[10]

Behind the Yoruba legend of origin we perceive the more complex Ife mythology involving a remote High God, Olodumare, and his antagonistic sons, Oduduwa and Obatala. All three deities participated in one way or another in the process of creating the world, which is supposed to have taken place in Ife. The creation myth of Ife can be shown to be closely related to the Baal Cycle of Ugarit.[11] On the legendary level, clear correspondences exist between the Hausa tradition of origin and the biblical genealogy of the tribes, both distinguishing between the chosen people descending from the legal wife and the underprivileged sons descending from the slave concubine. According to Ife mythology the same pattern is found in the grouping of the deities in the two major parties of Oduduwa and Obatala, two figures corresponding to Ishmael and Isaac-Jacob.[12]

These parallels are not accidental since Canaanite-Israelite myth and legend are based on a dualistic social organization in which two clusters of clans stand

[7] Koran 2: 260; 19: 43-49; 21: 53-68; 37: 85-97; Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, I, 257-264; transl. Brinner, *History*, II, 53-60; Kisā'ī, *Kisas*, 131-137; transl. Thackston, *Tales*, 140-147.

[8] Bello, *Infāq*, 48; transl. Arnett, *Rise*, 16.

[9] Current research insists mainly on the feedback aspects of the tradition (Law, "How many times", 39-40; Shaw, *Nigeria*, 10).

[10] Though published only in 1921, Johnson wrote his book originally in 1897 (*History*, VIII).

[11] Lange, "Erbe, II", 106-137; *id.*, "Ursprung des Bösen", 6-18.

[12] Lange, "Ursprung des Bösen", 20.

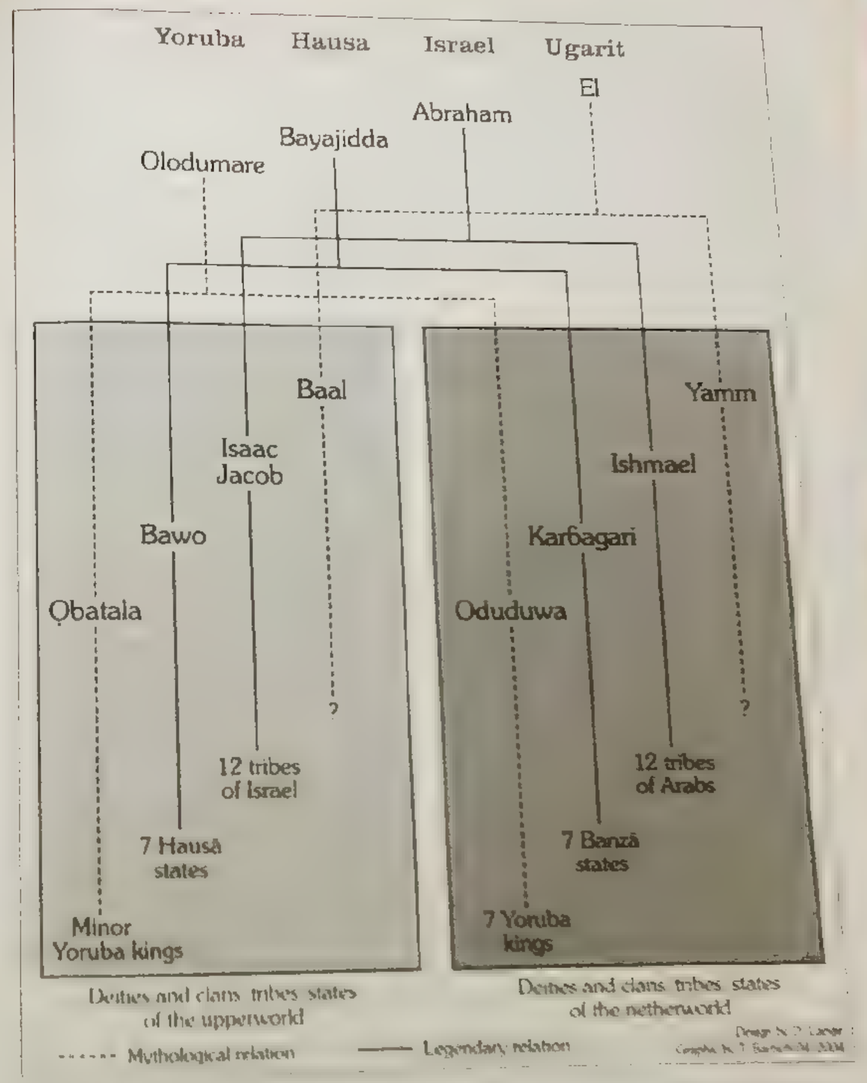


Chart 12 The Canaanite-Israelite descent pattern in Ugarit, Israel, Hausaland and Yorubaland

in sharp contrast to each other: there are those clans claiming descent from deities of the netherworld and those clans deriving their descent from deities of the upperworld. It is this intermediate level of two different categories of deities which allows us to understand the social implications of Canaanite mythology and the derived Israelite legend, since each deity is worshipped exclusively by the members of the specific clan attached to it.[13] The very close relationship between the members of a clan and a particular ancestral deity becomes clear when we consider the performance of the different festivals of Ife. Each festival is organized by the priests of a particular clan and it is enacted by the active members of the clan as a religious service done for the clan deity. Other people may join the festival at different stages, but they can do so only as members of related clans insofar as their own deity was once associated to the main deity of the festival. Even the organization of the traditional state depends on the clan structure of the society, since the palace officials are chosen according to their membership in specific civil service clans and their corresponding functions with respect to the clans of the society and their festivals. The king himself is considered to be the last of the deities and hence the closest to human beings. Through his support of the major cultic activities and his participation in the most important festivals he transcends the social segmentation introduced by the clans and the clan parties.[14] For the historian these connections are relevant insofar as they show that in the contexts under consideration creation myths and the cognate foundation legends are deeply rooted in society. When parallel myths, legends, social and political organizations can be found in distant societies, it has to be assumed that these societies must once have been in historical contact. For the Hausa, the Kanuri, and the Yoruba the available evidence clearly points to Canaanite-Israelite influences reaching the Central Sudan through Phoenician agency.[15]

The topic of this paper is the dying and rising god in the New Year festival of Ife. By comparing the Itapa festival of the religious capital of the Yoruba with the ancient Near Eastern New Year festival, I would like to draw attention to the remarkable number of parallels that exist between an African festival studied *in vivo* and a Canaanite festival solely known by its cult-mythology. Although mythological and ritual performances tend to emphasise different aspects of the underlying cultural pattern, it can often be assumed that specific myths and corresponding rituals form two sides of the same coin. On the African side, the ritual

[13] For further details see above pp. 237-239.

[14] For further details on clans in Ife see Bascom, *Yoruba*, 42-46, and Lange, "Preservation", 141-143.

[15] Lange, "Ursprung des Bösen", 5, 13-14; see also *id.*, "Erbe, II", 138-140, and Kühme, *Königtum*, 213-216.

performances are of outstanding importance, while the texts of the ancient Near East provide us with extensive accounts of myths. Once it is established that both sets of information belong to the same myth and ritual pattern, the comparisons become an heuristic device of far-reaching consequence. Thus, while the idea of the rising and dying god has, with respect to the ancient Near East, mainly been considered on the level of myths, its relevance for the actual celebration of the ancient New Year festivals remains highly conjectural.[16] In contrast, the New Year festival of Ife provides us with a concrete example of such performances for which the mythological background is partly missing. Taken together the cult-dramatic performances in an African context and the mythological testimonies of the ancient Canaanites provide us with new evidence for our understanding of the history of a major African society. Furthermore they help us to consider the rise of Christianity and Islam from a new perspective.[17]

1. The Itapa Festival and the Resurrection of Obatala

Various Yoruba towns celebrate an annual festival in honour of Obatala.[18] However, nowhere does this festival so distinctly resemble a resurrection festival as in Ife.[19] The organization of the festival is the duty of two descent groups, the clan of Obatala and the clan of Obameri. But not all members of these clans claiming descent from the respective deities are active practitioners of the religious cults. In fact, only the members of the cult groups within the Obatala and the Obameri clan organize and enact the festival. Moreover, there is no connection whatsoever between the two antagonistic cult groups, each of which celebrates its own festival ignoring that of the other. Nevertheless, both festivals take place simultaneously and are interrelated in various ways, such that it is necessary to consider them as complementary units of one great festival. Designed by unknown organizers from the past, the New Year festival with all its details seems to follow a master plan in giving a vivid and lasting expression to the fundamental religious concepts and emotions of Ife society.

[16] It is rejected by von Soden, "Zeugnis", 130-166, Smith, "Dying and rising gods", 521-527, and Smith, *Origins*, 104-131; but its validity is confirmed by Frymer-Kensky, "Tribulations of Marduk", 131-141, Day, *Yahweh*, 116-124, and Mettinger, *Riddle of Resurrection*, 55-111, 185-215.

[17] A more detailed account of the Itapa festival and its connection to the social and political organization of Ife will be found in Lange, *Chaoskampf* (forthcoming).

[18] For Epigbo, see Verger, "Epigbo festival", 208, and Lange, "Erbe, II", 114-115, for Ila see Pemberton/Afolayan, *Kingship*, 136-138, 141-145, and for Oyo see Beier, *Yoruba Myths*, 29-31.

[19] Stevens and Ojutalayo mention the final procession but fail to refer it to the resurrection of Obatala ("Orisha-nla", 198-199; Orisa, 94-96). Obatala is often called Orisanla in Ife.

According to the festal legend, the festival re-enacts in the first place the creation of the world in which several deities were involved. At the beginning of the world the High God Olodumare commissioned his eldest son, Obatala, with creation by handing over to him a special bag containing soil. However on his way from heaven to the primordial ocean, Obatala got drunk on palm wine and fell asleep. When Oduduwa, Olodumare's younger son, saw that his brother was sleeping, he stole the bag and created the world in his stead.[20] It is unclear whether he accomplished the act of creation or whether he left the work unfinished. The members of the Oduduwa clan believe that he indeed finished it, while the members of the Obatala clan claim that he did not since only their god had the necessary *àṣẹ* "divine authority" to fulfill the act of creation. These versions of the story of creation are still in dispute today.[21] They explain the never-ending quarrel between the two major clans of Ifẹ and hence between the two multi-clan parties constituted around them.[22] Yet, there is agreement among the members of the different clans and among the inhabitants of the different kingdoms of Yorubaland that the creation of the world took place on the very spot where the town of Ifẹ was later founded.[23]

At a later stage of primeval history, a quarrel over control of Ifẹ occurred in the course of which the primordial god Oduduwa was able to maintain his supremacy while the god of creation Obatala was expelled from the town. In this case, the confrontation did not take place between Obatala and Oduduwa himself, but between Obatala and Obameri, the god of death and the general of Oduduwa.[24] Once Obatala was in exile, it was again Obameri who made sure that his enemy was unable to return to town. Yemoo, Obatala's companion, stayed in

[20] Owing to this misfortune, the worshippers of Obatala still today abstain from drinking palm wine (Idowu, *Olodumare*, 118).

[21] Stevens and Willett consider Oduduwa to have been the creator of the world ("Orisha-nla", 185; *Ife*, 121), while Idowu claims that it was Obatala (*Olodumare*, 19-22). Only Ojutalayo is aware of the conflicting versions of the story of creation (*Orisa*, 2-3). Among the oral accounts gathered by the author are those of Obalubo/Oduduwa, Idare/Oduduwa, Lokore/Obameri (FN 01, 93, 108-9; FN 02, 223) and those of Obalale/Obatala, Olu/Obatala (FN 01, 93; FN 02, 20). Stevens was told that Obatala withdrew to heaven taking with him the bag of creation when he saw that Oduduwa had created the world ("Orisha-nla", 187). In contrast, one Obatala priest claims that his god finished the work of creation in six days and that he got drunk on his way back to heaven on the seventh day (Obaluru/Obatala FN 01, 101).

[22] On the relation between the myth of creation and the clan structure of Ifẹ see Lange, "Preservation", 132-134.

[23] Although providing an entirely different version of the creation account, the Yemoja myth recorded at Badagry also refers to Ifẹ as the place where the creation of the world occurred (Ellis, *Peoples*, 45).

[24] For the characteristics of the main deities of Ifẹ see below sec. 3 of this chapter.

Photo 3 The procession of resurrection approaches the palace, Ifẹ 2000

the town and remained faithful to him. In exile, Obatala was well received by his friend Obawinrin (i.e. Sanponna, the god of small pox), who even abdicated his throne in his favour. After a while, the citizens of Ifẹ saw that humans, animals and fields were becoming infertile. Realizing that these misfortunes were caused by the absence of Obatala, they wished for his return. The head of a third party, the deity Oramfe, changed sides and forced Obameri to let his enemy come back to town.[25] Indeed, when Obatala returned, fertility was restored and all the hardships the people had suffered came to an end.[26]

In accordance with the primordial confrontation between Obatala and Obameri, the main performances of the Itapa festival are staged by the Obatala and the Obameri cult groups, both celebrating their own festivities. In spite of

[25] Influenced by the saying about Oluorogbo according to which this deity is "a fighter on earth and in heaven", scholars thought up till now that this deity and not Oramfe was the arbiter in the creation conflict (Stevens, "Orisha-nla", 187; Obayemi, "Yoruba", 271; Eluyemi, *Ile-Ife*, 45).

[26] Obalale/Obatala FN 96, 121; Olulale/Obatala, Obaluru/Obatala FN 01, 95-96, 100. Obaseemi/Obameri denies that Obatala's exile had an influence on fertility (FN 01, 165). Since Stevens, Parratt and Ojutalayo rely on Oduduwa informants, they miss the fertility aspect of the exile ("Orisha-nla", 185-187; "Approach", 244; *Orisa*, 94-102). Stevens however mentions the birth of disfigured children owing to Obatala's retreat from the earth after the creation ("Orisha-nla", 187).

this antagonism during the festival, all traditionalists of Ifẹ know that the main confrontation was between Obatala and Oduduwa. Likewise, the various clans of Ifẹ are organized according to this basic mythological conflict, one party being led by the high priest of Oduduwa and the other by the high priest of Obatala. A third party headed by the high priest of Oramfẹ is also linked to the creation conflict since its members claim descent from the arbitrating god Oramfẹ and his helpers. The same basic pattern of three religious factions which underlies Ifẹ clan structure can also be found in the organization of the palace, the judicial senate, and the militia.[27] Although the Itapa festival is characterized by the confrontation between the descendants of Obatala and those of Obameri, the basic antagonism re-enacted is the one between Obatala and Oduduwa. Even the descendants of Obameri admit without hesitation that they actually fight on behalf of Oduduwa. Therefore, the apparently divergent cult-dramas of the Itapa festival together mirror the creation myth of Ifẹ.

The Itapa festival is all the more important as most of the cult groups of Ifẹ participate, irrespective of their own festivals, in one way or another in its various cult-dramatic re-enactments. However, the cult groups are strictly divided into the two major parties, one led by Obatala, or rather his priests, and the other by Oduduwa or his priests. Despite the fact that the priests of Obameri organize their own festival of opposition against Obatala, they acknowledge their subordination to the high priest of Oduduwa since their own god was a follower of his god. On four occasions during the festival this relationship of subordination is clearly expressed.[28] During the thirteen days of the festival there is not a single ritual action in the course of which members of the two distinct parties come into direct contact. This physical separation and the corresponding antagonism are all the more surprising, since the original setting of the festival clearly exhibits a coherent overall structure with various linkages between the activities of both cult groups and their associates.[29]

Historians are convinced that the Itapa festival corresponds to a re-enactment of events which occurred in the medieval period.[30] Relying on distorted and one-sided accounts of the festival and its mythology, they overlook the fact that the Itapa festival refers to the story of creation and that its main activities consist of cult-dramatic re-enactments of the descent of a fertility god into the netherworld

[27] For further details, see Lange, "Preservation", 131-132.

[28] These are during the cult meal of Obameri, during the cult meal of Esindale, during the Imojubi ritual behind the palace, and during the Imojubi dances in the "reception hall" of the palace.

[29] The two available descriptions of the Itapa festival by Stevens and Ojutalayo only consider the actions of the Obatala cult group.

[30] Smith, *Kingdoms*, 14; Obayemi, "Yoruba", 268-263; Adediran, "Early beginnings", 81-85.

and of his subsequent resurrection.[31] Furthermore, they do not take into account the basic euhemerism of Yoruba myths which involves the depiction of deities as human beings and the presentation of the mythical events of primordial times as profane stories. Hence we hear of the expulsion of the hero from town, his stay in exile, and his triumphant return to town. Actually, we do not face here an annual re-enactment of precise events of the past for the sake of historical commemoration. Instead the Itapa festival must rather be considered as a form of cult-dramatic worship consisting of the performance of a myth. Therefore the main features of the festival should be considered as providing the basic structural support for the traditional religion of Ifẹ. Three arguments favour this interpretation. First, the entire festal myth and its practical realization during the festival are connected to an account of the creation of the world. Second, all protagonists are at present worshipped as deities. Third, all the actions of the festival aim at nothing else than obtaining divine blessings.

2. The Baal Cycle of Ugarit and the Dying and Rising God

We now turn our attention to the pre-Roman North African horizon of Sudanic cultures. In view of the scarcity of North African sources from the Punic period, we must consider the Phoenician homeland on the Levantine coast and the surrounding Canaanite region. The most important texts were found in the trading town of Ugarit situated north of Tyre, Sidon, and Byblos, which was destroyed by the Sea Peoples around 1200 BC.[32] The cuneiform texts discovered in the mound of Ugarit provide the most important single corpus of documents for the reconstruction of the Canaanite culture of the Phoenicians. Among the mythological and legendary texts of Ugarit, the Baal Cycle is particularly relevant for any attempt to explore the festival culture of Canaan and hence of Punic North Africa.[33]

It remains unclear to what extent the Baal Cycle is a mythological or a ritual text. While most scholars restrict their enquiry to its mythological features, consisting of an account of the actions of the main gods of Ugarit, some scholars regard

[31] Stevens mentions the creation account but omits referring to the scene of the palm wine. In his opinion, the resurrection only concerns Yemoo ("Orisha-nla", 184-185, 198-199). Without having been able to assist at the procession of resurrection, Ojutalayo correctly mentions the final victory of Obatala on this day, but she renders other details in a distorted way (*Orisa*, 94-96).

[32] Loretz, *Ugarit und die Bibel*, 6-7; Yon, *Cité d'Ougarit*, 31-35.

[33] Xella, "Ugarit", DCPP, 481-484; Lipinski, *Dieux*, 49-51;

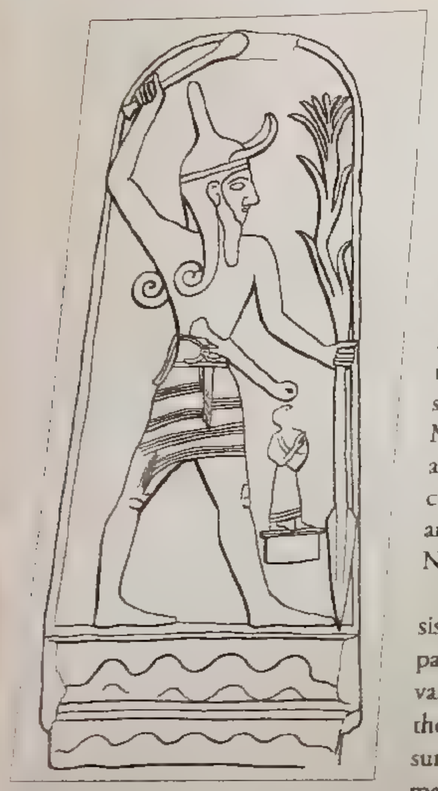


Chart 13: "Baal au foudre" – stela from Ugarit (Louvre AO 15775; Keel, *Welt*, n° 291)

it as a liturgy of the New Year festival.[34] Going one step further, some interpreters believe it to contain the most convincing evidence of the ancient Near Eastern mythological or even cult-mythological pattern of the dying and rising god.[35] A few researchers even try to uncover specific scenes of a cult-drama in the text dealing with the death and the resurrection of the fertility god.[36] They thus join earlier scholars in their attempts to interpret the Mesopotamian text first called "Passion and Triumph of Bel-Marduk" in terms of a cult-dramatic re-enactment of Bel's death and resurrection during the Babylonian New Year festival.[37]

The narration of the Baal cycle consists of three different parts. In the first part, the weather god Baal confronts and vanquishes the primordial god Yamm in the so-called chaos combat. Although the surviving text fragments do not explicitly mention any act of creation, some scholars by comparing the Baal Cycle to the Babylonian *Enuma Elish* draw attention to the scattering of Yamm and the subsequent rise of Baal to kingship and thus consider both to express cosmogonic ideas.[38] The building of Baal's temple is the

[34] For an overview of the different interpretations of the Ugaritic Baal Cycle, see Smith, *Baal Cycle*, I, 58-114. For the most comprehensive study of the Canaanite New Year festival, see de Moor, *New Year*, I, 4-12.

[35] Gaster, *Thespis*, 114-244; Engnell, *Divine Kingship*, 99-100; Smith, *Origins*, 120-130; Mettinger, *Riddle of Resurrection*, 55-81. For the pattern of the dying god and rising god, see Baudissin, *Adonis und Esmun*, 1911, and Frazer, *Dying God*, 1913.

[36] Hvidberg, *Weeping and Laughter*, 15-49. Similarly but less cult oriented Gray, *Legacy of Canaan*, 20-75.

[37] Zimmern, *Neujahrsfest*, 14-26; Pallis, *Akitu Festival*, 200-206; Frymer-Kensky, "Tribulations of Marduk", 131-141.

[38] Fisher, "Creation at Ugarit," 313-324; Clifford, *Creation Accounts*, 117-133.

most important theme in the second part of the cycle. Contrary to Yamm and Môt, Baal insists that he should have his own a temple, so that his rule be firmly established. In the third part, the god of death, Môt, challenges and defeats Baal, forcing him to descend into the netherworld.[39] As if wanting to emphasise Baal's literal death, the author describes how his consort Anat searches for him, finds his body, mourns for him, and finally buries him.[40] Yet, Baal is not dead forever. In the final sequence of the cycle he reappears, engages Môt in a dramatic struggle, vanquishes him with the help of Shapsh the sun, and ascends to his throne.[41] As the outcome of a power-struggle, Baal's resurrection corresponds to a radical turn of fortune and hence to the climax of a cult-drama: after his painful descent into the netherworld, Baal's resurrection is the consequence of a cosmic victory over his enemy. No doubt a radical change of mood from sorrow to joy was quite suitable for a dramatic display of Baal's fate. Most likely the author of the text does not mention any details of the festival as such because he, like all the participants, felt that the merging of the two spheres, the divine and the human, lay at the centre of the New Year festival as a religious experience.

The books of the Old Testament refer to a corresponding great annual festival, the Feast of Booths, only in passing. Although the Israelites associated it with the exodus from Egypt, the festival must have had strong Canaanite connotations.[42] From the *Mishna*, we learn that the Feast of Booths was celebrated in the temple of Jerusalem in connection with the earlier worship of the sun by the Priests (*kôhanim*): the Levites on the stairs between the Court of men and the Court of women behaved as if they wanted to obstruct the movement of two Priests towards the rising sun.[43] The two priestly groups were apparently the last survival of a once highly significant distinction between two groups of deities, the party of Baal/Yahweh and the party of Yamm-Môt. Similarly, the cult-dramatic re-enactment of the Baal myth in Ugarit must have been in the hands of groups of priests belonging to two different clans.[44] Therefore the attempt to identify the performers of the erstwhile Canaanite cult-drama, to specify their organization, and to describe their ritual performances is not pure speculation.

[39] KTU 1.5 V 2 – 1.5 VI 10; transl. Wyatt, *Religious Texts*, 123-126.

[40] KTU 1.5 VI 27 – 1.6 I 31; transl. Wyatt, *Religious Texts*, 128-130.

[41] KTU 1.6 VI 16 – 1.6 VI 53; transl. Wyatt, *Religious Texts*, 142-145.

[42] Mowinckel, *Psalms*, I, 140-182; Gaster, *Festivals*, 80-98;

[43] Sukkah 5, 1-5; transl. Neusner, 288-289; Gaster, *Festivals*, 80-98; Ez 8, 16; Wellhausen, *Prolegomena*, 115-146; de Moor, *New Year*, I, 12-29. I am grateful to Claudia Wolter for information on the present celebration of Jewish festivals in Israel.

[44] C. F. Lange, "Ursprung des Bösen", 13-26.

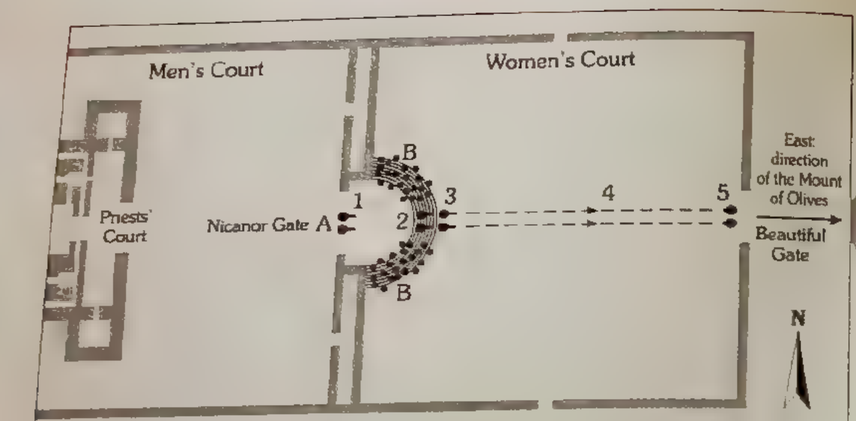


Chart 14: Remnants of a cult-drama between Priests and Levites in the Herodian Temple of Jerusalem

3. Deities of the Itapa Festival of Ifẹ

Before turning to the cult-dramatic enactment of the Itapa festival itself, it is important to identify the various gods in whose honour the festival is performed. The parallels between the Yoruba and the Canaanite deities will show the close relationship beween the two sets of phenomena.[45]

Olódùmarè

As the highest god of the Yoruba, Olodumare is superior to the other deities without actively influencing events on earth. Therefore, no cult is dedicated to him. For the Itapa festival, he is important because the Yoruba consider him to

[45] For the general plausibility of Phoenician influences from North Africa see Lange, "Ursprung des Bösen", 4-18.

have been the ultimate instigator of the act of creation.[46] As a remote High God Olodumare has much in common with the Canaanite god El. Etymologically the name Olodumare is probably derived from Olu/El and from *demaros* a word probably based on the Aramaic *di marûs*, "the one of the height".[47]

Ọbàtálá

The Yoruba venerate Obatala as the god of creation, or more precisely the god who created human beings. Not only in Ife but also in other towns, annual festivals celebrated in his honour represent him as a "dying and rising god" of fertility.[48] In Canaan and Israel, Obatala should be compared to Baal, Melqart and Yahweh.[49] His name can be interpreted as *oba - ba'al* "king" with the addition of *t'la*, "the one who raises himself".[50]

Odùduwà

He was the opponent of Obatala in the primeval time of creation. Taking into account other Yoruba myths, he can be described as the primordial god whose claim to fulfill creation was originally based on his identification with "water", the first existing matter. Being the only Yoruba deity to have both a masculine and a feminine form, he corresponds to the Canaanite masculine Yamm "Sea" and the Babylonian feminine Tiamat "Sea". The name Oduduwa seems to be derived from the Yamm's prominent epithet *mdd il* or *mddd il* "Beloved of El" which is mentioned in the Baal Cycle.[51] The inscription of the Mesha stela shows that southeastern Israelites venerated a god called Dôd as well as Yahweh. This dualism is similar to the Ugaritic contrast between Baal and Yamm.[52] Arabian inscriptions suggest that the Levites worshipped a deity called Wadd.[53] In the South Arabian kingdoms of Ma'în and Awsân, Wadd was the moon god and the main

[46] Idowu, *Olodumare*, 38-47; Hallgren, *Good Things*, 23-25.

[47] Lipinski, *Dieux et déesses*, 123-124. On the attributes of El see further Pope, *El in the Ugaritic Texts*, 25-54.

[48] Idowu, *Olodumare*, 26; Lange, „Erbe, II", 114-115.

[49] Baudissin, *Adonis und Esmun*, 450-510; Widengren, *Sakrales Königtum*, 62-79; Engnell, *Divine Kingship*, 97-110; Lipinski, *Dieux*, 226-243.

[50] Lange, "Erbe, II", 109.

[51] KTU 1.1 IV 20; 1.3 III 38; 1.3 III 43; 1.4 II 34; 1.4 VI 12; 1.4 VII 3.

[52] KAI, 181 12; Mowinckel, *Psalms*, I, 137-138.

[53] Grimme, "Südarabischer Levitismus", 169-199; Höfner, "Stammesgruppen", 476-477; Lange, "Ursprung des Bösen", 16, 19, 25.

deity of the state.[54] These pieces of evidence make it likely that Wadd/Modūd/Dôd was a widely venerated god in the ancient Near East corresponding to the Ugaritic Yamm.

Ọbameri

He is a Yoruba god only known in Ife. Although his priests and followers are the direct opponents of Ọbatala during the Itapa festival, in the primordial conflict Ọbameri acted as the military arm of Oduduwa.[55] Besides this basic dependency on his overlord, mythological accounts tell us very little about him. His main characteristic as a god of death can only be inferred from the functions of his high priest.[56] The high priest of Ọbameri is supposed to be able to force people to commit suicide and he is called upon in cases of suicide. At the burial of the king, his functions are more important than those of the other priests of the Oduduwa party. Furthermore, it is believed that the staff of Ọbameri makes women barren.[57] His equivalent in Ugarit is Môt, whose name means "death".[58] Ọbameri's name can be etymologically traced back to *ọba – ba'al* "Lord, owner" and *meri – môt* "death".[59]

Yemòó

She is Ọbatala's companion and wife. Yemoo's image stands next to her consort's in the temple of Ọbatala and it is treated in the same way. Only during the procession of resurrection, when the high priest and the high priestess of Obatala and Yemoo play the roles of the two deities, is a clear distinction made between her and her husband. As Ọbatala and Yemoo are venerated in the same temple and their cult-dramatic representations are closely connected, their worshippers belong to

[54] Höfner, "Religionen Arabiens", 289-290. On Yamm see Pope, "Jamm", *in:* Haussig, *Wörterbuch*, 289-291, and Fantar, *Dieu de la mer*, 27-130.

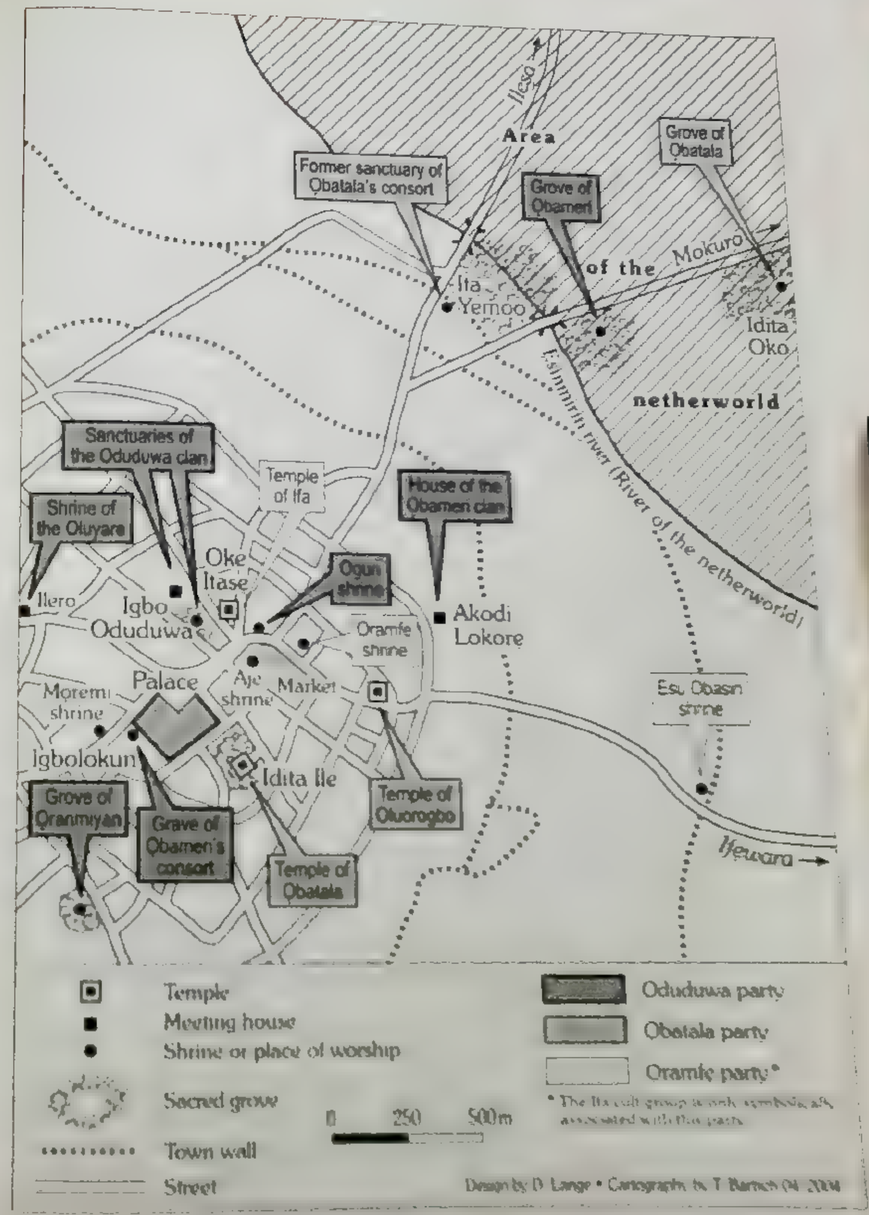
[55] Ademakinwa, *Ife*, II, 28-32; Fabunmi, *Ife Shrines*, 14; Stevens, "Orisha-nla", 185-187.

[56] Likewise standing for death among the Yoruba are the god Amota in Ila, the Egungun masquerade Mope in Ede and the quarter Oke Mopo in Ejigbo (Pemberton/Afolayan, *Kingship*, 179-181; Beier, *Year*, 27; Oluwin FN 02, 143-144).

[57] Lokore/Obameri FN 00, 33 (suicide), 46, 180-189 (dead king); Idare/Oduduwa FN 00, 105 (hanged people); Obaseemi/Obameri FN 01, 163 (staff); Orunbato/Obameri FN 02, 88 (king's grave).

[58] On Môt see Cassuto, "Baal and Mot", 77-86, and Pope, "Möt", *in:* Haussig, *Wörterbuch*, 300-302.

[59] Lange, "Erbe, II", 116-125.



Map 6: Important temples and sanctuaries of the three cult parties of Ife

a single clan, the Idita community.[60] On the cult level, the same close relationship between these two deities exists in other Yoruba towns.[61] With respect to Canaan and Israel, Yemoo corresponds to Baal and Yahweh's consort Anat. Possibly the name Yemoo is derived from *ybmt* (Yabamatu), the most important epithet of Anat. It occurs in the Baal Cycle, has the meaning of "widow", and probably refers to the time when Baal is absent.[62]

Sànpònná

He is the god of small pox throughout Yorubaland. In Ife it is said that Obawinrin, the high priest of Sanponna, welcomed Obatala after his expulsion from town and gave over to him the position of *oba Igbò* "king of the netherworld".[63] During festive ceremonies, the high priests of Sanponna wear a long rafia masquerade (*Aarè*) as a cult dress that covers the whole body. They are then known as Oluyare "owners of the *Aarè*". According to the de-mythologized version of the Ife tradition, re-enacted in particular during the Edi festival, their ancestors, the Igbò, are considered to have been an ancient neighbouring tribe which attacked the town and seized the people.[64] In Canaan, we find the pest god Rashap, whose Mesopotamian equivalent, Nergal, is known as lord of the netherworld.[65] In Israelite folk religion, Rashap can still be recognised as a god who followed Yahweh (Hab 3:5). The name of Sanponna is either derived from Rashap, by the omission of the first syllable, or from Saphon, the name of the deified holy mountain of the Canaanites.[66]

4. The Most Important Cult-Dramatic Performances of the Itapa Festival

The activities of the Itapa festival of Ife deal with the death and resurrection of the god of creation, Obatala. The dramatic suspense of the festival is derived from

[60] Stevens, "Orisha-nla", 193-199; Ojutalayo, *Orisa*, 87-102; Eluyemi, *Ile-Ife*, 17.

[61] Ede and Ogbomoso (FN 00, 192; 201). In Ifetedo, Yemoo/Yeemolu is the wife of Oranmiyan (FN 00, 161).

[62] KTU 1.3 II 33; 1.4 II 15. For the meaning of the full epithet *ybmt ilmm* "widow of the Lord (Baal)" see Pope, "Anat", *in:* Haussig, *Wörterbuch*, 240. On Anat see further Kapelrud, *Violent Goddess*, and Cassuto, *Goddess Anath*.

[63] Ademakinwa, *Ife*, II, 34; Stevens, "Orisha-nla", 185. For an explanation of the title *oba Igbò* see Lange, "Erbe, II", 135-137.

[64] Walth, "Edi festival", 230-236; Ademakinwa, *Ife*, II, 32-52; Willett, *Ife*, 122-123; Smith, *Kingdoms*, 15; Lange, "Erbe, II", 122-137.

[65] See Pope/Röllig and Edzard *in:* Haussig, *Wörterbuch*, 109-110; 305-306; Fulco, *Relep*, 33-71, and Pardee, *Ritual*, 282-283.

[66] Lange, "Erbe, II", 130-133. For the holy mountain of Canaan see Clifford, *Cosmic Mountain*, 57-79.

the primordial conflict between Obatala and the god of death Obameri, whose festivals are celebrated simultaneously. By annually re-enacting the conflict which first led to Obatala's expulsion from town and later to his triumphant return, the cult groups of Obatala and of Obameri not only commemorate an event of the primeval past, they also placate their respective deities for the upcoming year. At the same time, the identification of the participants of the festival with the fate of their deity leads to an intense communion with the ancestors of their clans.

The terms netherworld, netherworld's river, and resurrection are important for understanding the inner meaning of the festival, although they are not familiar to the participants. The main reason for this estrangement from the fundamental concept of the festival lies in the euhemeristic approach of the Yoruba and of the Canaanites alike to the primeval events: when the festal legend mentions Obatala's expulsion from town, his sojourn in exile, and his triumphant return, it is difficult for the participants of the festival to recognise that in mythological terms these events correspond to the distant and abstract death and the resurrection of the deity. Nevertheless, the overall religious orientation of the festival and the presence of the deities felt during the cult-dramatic re-enactments, make it clear that celebrating the Itapa festival is an intense form of worship. It has nothing to do with the historical commemoration of any outstanding event.[67]

In the following brief outline of the festival, I discuss only the three most important days of the festival and its key dramatic moments.[68]

Ìpiwo

On the seventh day, cult servants fetch from Idita Ile, i.e. the Obatala temple, the statues of Obatala and Yemoo out of the holy of holies and wrap them in large white cloths. At the head of a ceremonious procession, in which all members of the cult group participate, two junior priests carry the wrapped, but still distinctly recognisable statues, through the town with great effort. They cross the netherworld river and finally reach Idita Oko, the netherworld grove of the Obatala cult group.[69]

[67] The inhabitants of Igbo and Ede celebrate a similar festival of liberation and hence of resurrection of Obatala (Lange, "Erbe, II", 114-116; Beier, *Year*, 13-14). In Ila the resurrection festival of Obatala takes place at the same time as the festival in honour of Amota (Pemberton/Afolayan, *Kingship*, 136-144, 179-181).

[68] The summary description of the Itapa festival is based on participant observations in January and February 2000 and on subsequent interviews concerning its different performances in August/September 2001 and 2002.

[69] The Esimmirin river can be interpreted as a river separating the world of the living from the world of the dead and the two groves of the Obatala and the Obameri people beyond it, Igbo Obameri and Idita Oko, as groves of the netherworld.

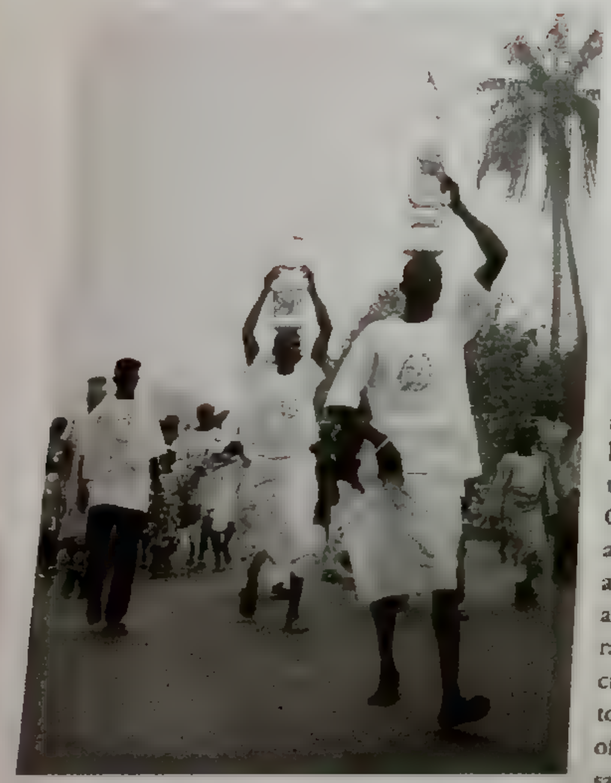


Photo 4: Junior priests carry the statues of Obatala and Yemoo to the grove of the netherworld, Ife 2000

By this time, the Obameri people are already in their grove beyond the netherworld river where they worship their god and two minor deities. They can hear the procession of their opponents passing at a short distance. A little later they move to the processional way the Obatala people just used and pour palm wine across it. Through this action they commemorate Obatala's failure to create the world owing to his excessive drinking of palm wine. At the same time, they symbolically deny the Obatala people their return into town. Subsequently, they march to the palace where they dance in front of the king, thus demonstrating that from now on they are the ones who rule the town.[70]

In the meantime, the Obatala people start a night vigil in Idita Oko: they unwrap the statues of Obatala and Yemoo and paint the statues and the naked torsos of the highest priests with white dots. This is done in rememberance of the god of small pox and ruler of the netherworld, Sanponna, and his friendly reception of Obatala.[71] Then the rituals of the long night vigil begin: by singing, dancing, offer-

[70] The earlier descriptions of the Itapa festival by Stevens and Ojutalayo fail to mention the cult-dramatic performances of the Obameri people and the activities of their allies from the Oduduwa party.

[71] The legendary accounts always refer to Obawinrin, the highest priest of the Oluyare who are worshippers of Sanponna (Stevens, "Orisha-nla", 185; Ojutalayo, *Oriṣa*, 10-11; Owajan/Oluyare, Woyeasiri/Oluyare FN 00, 112, 120).

Photo 5: The high priest of Obamen pours palm wine on the processional route of the Obatala people, Ife 2000

ing sacrifices and thus commemorating the unfortunate fate of their deity whom the inhabitants of the town betrayed, the Obatala people worship their god. The members of the Obatala segment of the palace staff and the members of the other cult groups of the Obatala party join them for the final zoo sacrifice.

Ìmójùbi

Two days later on the evening of the ninth day, all members of the Oduduwa party celebrate the climax of their rule over the town. Organized by the Obameri people, they first perform a night-time ritual just behind the palace at Igbolokun. Two statues, one female and the other male, are brought into a temporarily erected palm hut and placed into a hole. Then the high priest of Obameri blesses all the high priests of the Oduduwa party one by one.

Subsequently they move together into the palace and dance before the king the dances of the 401 gods of Ife. First, the different priests of Obameri dance one after the other, then the different priests of Oduduwa, then all the other high priests of the Oduduwa party, and finally the king. They even sing the songs of their enemies from the Obatala and the Oramfe party whose priests are not present. The mem-

Photo 6: The Ọbaṃerí people fight in front of the palace against the return of Ọbatala into the town, Ifẹ 2000

bers of the Oduduwa party thus demonstrate their willingness to include all cult parties in their rule over the town. During both rituals the high priests of Obameri and of Oduduwa and their allies show the extent to which their deities were in full agreement about the course to take in their fight against Obatala.

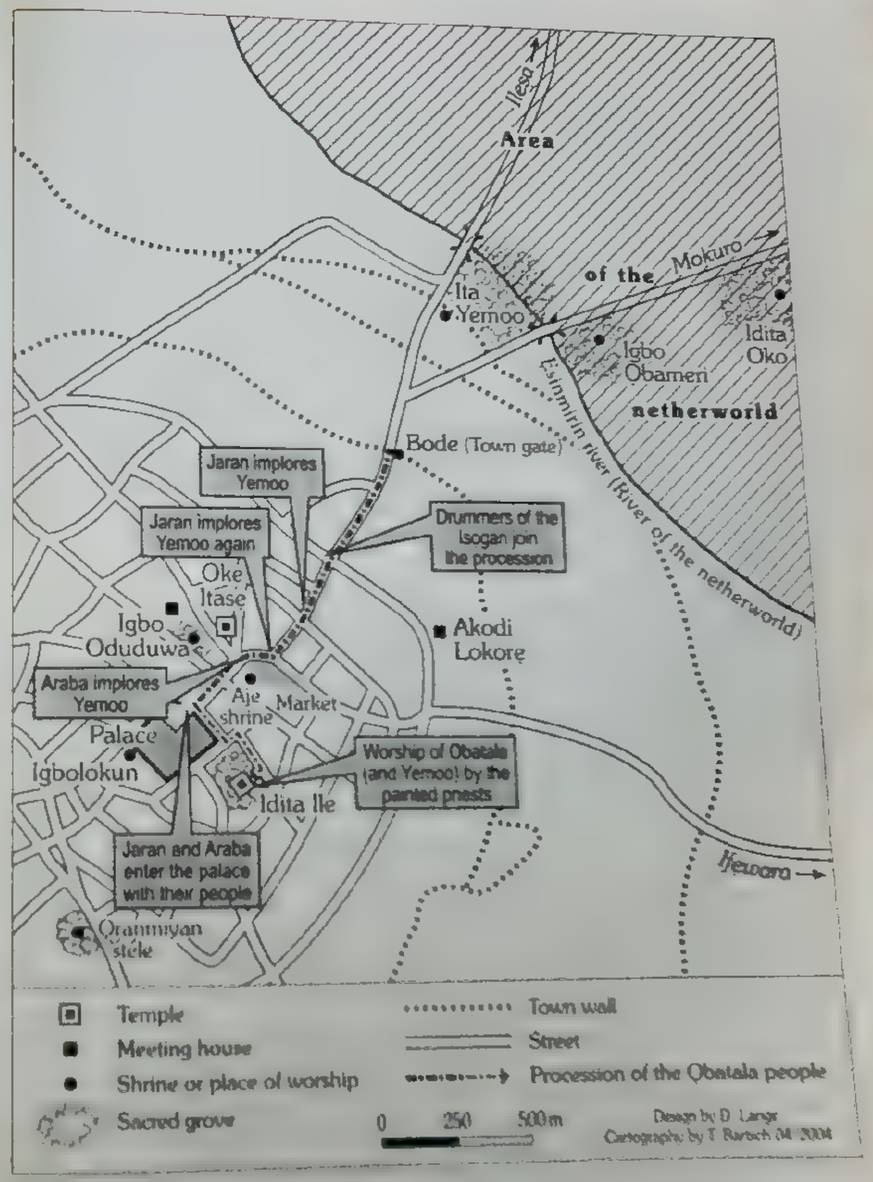
Finally, the Obameri people prepare for the decisive combat against their opponents who try to escape from the netherworld. They sing the whole night and dance through the town and thus demonstrate their determination to oppose the return of Obatala into town.[72]

Ẹ̀kuru Ìtàpá

At noon on the tenth day, the peak of ritual fighting in front of the palace occurs, in which Obatala and his people are branded once more as arch-enemies.[73] All of a sudden the fighting spirit of the Obameri people vanishes.

[72] After the dances in the palace the Oduduwa people return home, only the Obameri people and one other group, the people of Esindale, roam about the town for the whole night without ever meeting.

[73] Neither at this nor at any other scene of the festival do the antagonistic cult groups actually meet.



Map 7. Procession of the resurrection of Obatala

Photo 7: Representing Obatala, the painted priests dance at the rear of the procession, Ife 2000

Then the Obameri people proceed into the palace where they receive the burning torches that they themselves had prepared and carried ceremoniously into the palace at the beginning of the festival. Then they run with their torches through town into their netherworld grove in order to quench the fire with the blood of a sacrificial animal. By leaving the town and crossing the river of the netherworld, they indicate that the short period during which their party had assumed rulership is over.

In the afternoon of the tenth day, the celebration of Obatala's resurrection begins. The procession forms itself near the entrance of the town on the way to the netherworld river. Once again, the highest priests are painted with white dots in remembrance of the friendship of their god with the god of small pox and ruler of the netherworld. Continuously dancing beside each other in a row at the end of the procession, they represent the god of creation resurrected from the netherworld.

The procession is led by a row of boys marching in front of each other carrying wrapped bottles on their heads containing sacred water. They are followed at a distance by a girl carrying the throne stool of Yemoo on her head. Behind her the highest priestess of the Obatala cult, Yeyelorisa, walks in a dignified manner. She is in a trance and embodies Yemoo herself. The procession, slowly moving toward the palace, is successively joined by other members of the Obatala clan: young men of the Isogan age-group playing drums, other men, and elderly women.

Photo 8: Jaran implores Yemoo that Obatala should forgive the people of the town, Ife 2000

Close to the palace the procession stops three times. First Jaran, the highest palace official of the Obatala service group, leaves his group and comes close to Yeyelorisa. Accompanying cult servants hide the two behind a white cloth: in a low voice Jaran begs Yemoo, now seated on her throne stool, to try to convince Obatala to forgive the town's citizens for their previous unfaithfulness that led to his expulsion. After the first attempt fails, the same official approaches Yemoo a second time with the same request. Frustrated once more, he again joins the procession with his people. At last, already in view of the palace, Araba, the high priest of the Ife oracle, appears with his fifteen priests. When he expresses the same request for forgiveness, Yemoo's reply gives some hope.

Together with the Obatala people, the members of the Obatala segment of the palace staff and the Ifa priests proceed toward the palace. They stop in front of the palace which the Ifa priest enters in order to consult with the royal Ifa oracle. When the oracle announces that Obatala has forgiven the town's people their earlier betrayal, the Obatala people, the palace staff, and all the spectators from the town joyously respond.[7] Now the procession of the Obatala people continues

[7] If at present there are any spectators at all, it is curiosity which makes them look at the ceremonies, not any concern about the religious meaning of the cult-dramatic performances.

confidently to the temple: Obatala has returned and Idita Ile will once again be his home.

In the late evening the king, barely clad and protected from the public view by a white cloth, comes out of the Edena gate and walks to Idita Ile. Nobody else is allowed to approach this area.[75] He humbly worships Obatala and begs in his turn that the deity forgive the people of Ife. He then returns to the palace waiting for Yeyeloriṣa in the ritual chamber of the Obatala group. A little later, Yeyeloriṣa follows the king into the palace carrying sacred water hidden under her dress which she hands over to the king by way of a palace official. This gesture shows the king's divinity at this point as based on his identification with Obatala, with Yemoo as an intermediary. Blessed by Yemoo – which in an attenuated form corresponds to his earlier sacred marriage to her[76] – the king thus becomes the *alter ego* of the resurrected Obatala. Just as Obatala rose from the netherworld to save all people from death, the king assumes similar power to turn death into life (*ikú, alaṣèe èkeji òrisà* – "death, owner of a power like that of Obatala")[77].

5. Comparisons Between the Itapa Festival of Ife and Ancient Semitic New Year Festivals

With respect to possible comparisons between African and Semitic phenomena, the New Year festival is the most significant link between Yoruba culture of the tropical rain forest and Canaanite culture of North Africa. Besides the six prominent deities of the Itapa festival, all with precise Canaanite equivalents, a number of structural parallels between the Itapa festival of Ife and the Semitic New Year festival provide further evidence for the existence of a common cultural pattern extending from Phoenician North Africa to Hausa and Yorubaland in West Africa.[78]

[75] This interdiction is still strictly applied today, but it is now also meant to conceal the fact that the king himself has not performed the ritual for more than twenty years. In 2002 he declared that for the sake of Christianity he would no longer participate in any festival at all (Lange, "Preservation", 147-148).

[76] Such a marriage is still thought to be concluded by the king at his enthronement between himself and the well of the palace, Yeyemolu (Fabunmi, *Ife Shrines*, 26).

[77] Although usually this motto of the divine king is taken to refer to all *orisa* "deities" (Pemberton/Afolayan, *Kingship*, 92), the Obatala worshippers relate it to their deity alone (Obaluru/Obatala, FN 01, 103, but also an elder of the Obajio family, FN 00, 143). For the motto see also Fasogbon, *Constitutional History*, 23, and Stevens, "Orisha-nla", 188.

[78] For preliminary evidence concerning the integration of the Hausa into this cultural pattern, see Lange, "Dimension", 161-203, and *id.*, "Ursprung des Bösen", 6-8.

1. The Itapa festival is a New Year festival centred on the death, a three-days' stay in the netherworld, and the resurrection of the god of creation on the fourth day. This festival scheme appears to have been widely followed in the Semitic world.[79] In different ways it has survived in the Easter celebrations of Christians and the *hājj* ceremonies of Muslims.[80]
2. The Itapa festival consists of the cult-dramatic representation of a divine conflict between a god of creation and a god of death. For both deities it is their descent groups or clans and in particular their specific cult groups which organize the festival. On the mythological level the same conflict is described by the Baal Cycle of Ugarit.
3. Even though the cult groups of Obatala and of Obameri are the organizers of the Itapa festival, most of the other cult groups of Ife - belonging to two major cult parties led by the high priest of Obatala and the high priest of Oduduwa - also participate in the festivities. In Ugarit a similar dualistic antagonism exists in the mythological opposition between the "gods of the circle of Baal" and the "sons of Athirat".[81]
4. Although most of the festal celebrations primarily involve the cult groups, the king and the palace staff of Ife have important roles in the festival. The members of two of the three palace chambers are the intermediaries between the two antagonistic cult parties and the king. Their leaders provide the sacrificial materials and they represent the king at important cult-dramatic actions outside the palace. In particular, the leader of the Obatala faction plays an important role during the resurrection procession. In Phoenician cities, certain officials, often having the title of *suffet*, had the task of resurrecting the dying and rising god Melqart.[82]
5. Just as the clans of Ife are divided into two major parties and one minor group, the palace staff is split into three segments according to the three groups of deities.[83] In Punic North Africa the threefold palace structure of Ife might correspond to a municipal organization headed by two or three *suffets* having administrative, judicial and religious functions.[84]

[79] For Mesopotamia, see Zimmern, *Neujahrsfest*, 3-26; for Israel, see Gressmann, *Adonis und Eimun*, 405-423; for Ugarit see del Olmo Lete, *Canaanite Religion*, 210-212, and for Phoenicia, see Lipinski, "Fête de l'ensevelissement", 30-58.

[80] Meissner, *Babylonien und Assyrien*, II, 98; Lange, "Jesus", 4-6, 10-11; Daum, *Religion*, 119-128, 131-144.

[81] Herrmann, "Göttergruppen", 93-104; Smith, *Baal Cycle*, I, 92-96; Olmo Lete, *Canaanite Religion*, 49-51.

[82] Bonnet, *Melqart*, 174-179; Bonnet and Lipinski, "*Miqrm Elim*", DCPP, 294-295.

[83] On the palace organization of Ife see Adediran, "Analysis", 3-29, and Lange, "Preservation", 131-143.

[84] Gsell, *Histoire*, II, 193-201; Gubel/Lipinski, "Suffètes", DCCP, 429.

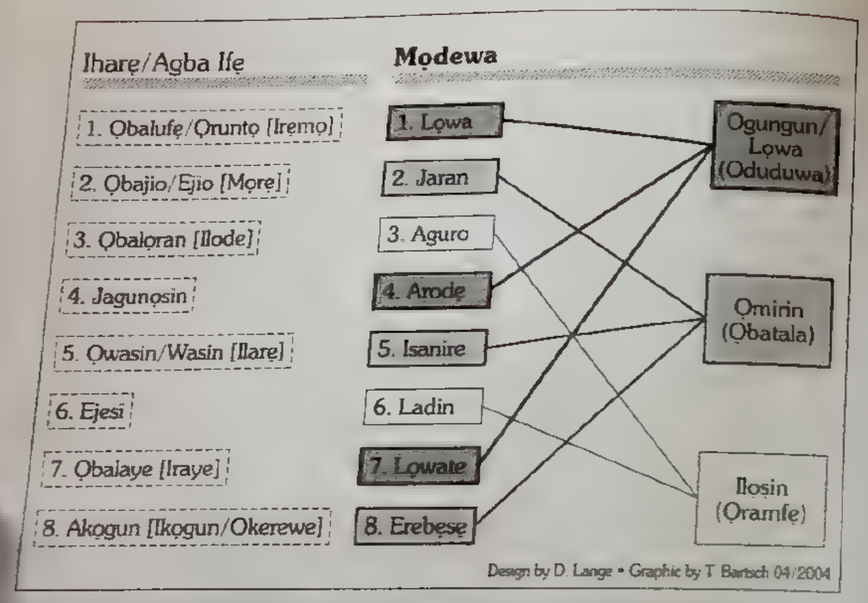


Chart 15: The town officials and the three segments of the palace organization of Ife

6. Two of the three palace service groups of Ife are deeply involved in the celebration of the Itapa festival. Indeed, members of the two major factions provide the antagonistic cult parties with sacrificial materials on behalf of the king, the officials of the Oduduwa ritual chamber (Ogungun) dealing with the cult groups of the Oduduwa party, and the officials of the Obatala ritual chamber (Omirin) with those of the Obatala party. Members of both chambers are born into their groups and during their life can climb the hierarchical ladder from infant servant to the position of the most senior palace official of their respective chamber. On the Oduduwa side the most senior palace official is called Lowa, and by extension the same name is also given to his two senior colleagues of the same ritual chamber.[83] The same or similar names are used for half-priestly or priestly officials, occupying a similar structural position in relation to the divine parties, in the Yoruba city states of Ila, Ejigbo, Ifon, and Ede. These officials can be equated with the order of the Levitic priests in Israel, in terms of the earlier cultic functions of the Levites in the polytheistic setting. The validity of the comparison is more obvious for the Levites of the Arabian oasis of

[83] Adediran, "Analysis", 27 n. 52; Fuogbon, *Constitutional History*, 27-28.

al-'Ulā/Dedan of the sixth century BC, who were worshippers of Wadd (= Dôd/Oduduwa).[86] In Israel the Levites were integrated into the centralized cultic organization as a secondary priestly order subject to the Priests (*kôhanîm*).[87]

7. Among the important sanctuaries of the Itapa festival are individual temples for Obatala and the three major deities of his party.[88] By contrast strictly speaking neither Obameri nor Oduduwa have a temple. Instead, for the Igbolokun rituals of Imojubi the members of the cult group of Obameri erect a hut of palm leaves behind the palace in which a male and a female deity are brought together and worshipped. This palm hut might correspond to the booths of the Israelite feast of Tabernacles or *Sukkôt* which in Israelite legend was later connected to the exodus from Egypt to Canaan.[89] Similar booths were erected in Ugarit to temporarily house pairs of deities.[90]

The comparisons between cultural forms of Ife and similar phenomena of the Semitic world reveal how little we know about the cultic and political organization of Ife and other Yoruba cities. But more particularly they show that we are still far better informed about the social and institutional implications of cult-mythological matters among the Yoruba of Ife than among the ancient Semites, however advantageous the documentary situation might be in certain regions and towns like Ugarit.

6. Conclusion: Trans-Saharan Slave Trade and the Spread of the Canaanite State

Historians are expected to be able to explain how in Yorubaland similar institutions to those of Phoenician North Africa and the wider Semitic world could arise. In our time they will not content themselves with vague ideas of diffusion which were in vogue during the colonial period. We face here complex and interwoven parallels between phenomena which cannot possibly have been transmitted by isolated and haphazard individual travellers or nomadic tribes. In spite of the fact that the comparisons presented above concern specific mythological and institutional details, it has to be assumed that these isolated fea-

[86] See Lange, "Ursprung des Bösen", 18-26; Grimme, "Südarabischer Levitismus", 169-199.

[87] *Mishnah*, II, Sukkah 5: 2-4; transl. Neusner, 288-289; Gaster, *Festivals*, 82-83.

[88] Besides the people of Obatala, the worshippers of Olurogbo, Orisakire and Orisateko also each have their own temple.

[89] Gaster, *Festivals*, 84; Loretz, *Ugarit*, 77.

[90] De Moor, *Anthology*, 121 n. 25, 121 n. 25; Pardee, *Texts rituels*, I, 209-210.

tures, emerging from the documentary and ethnographical record, belong to a cultural continuum consisting of fully articulated social and cult-mythological structures. Ife is in this respect only a particularly well-preserved example of an ancient culture in which the cult-dramatic underpinnings of myth presuppose a context of corresponding organizational and topographical features. Beyond Ife, other Yoruba city states, and in the West African context other Sudanic polities, in particular those of the Hausa and the Kanuri, seem to have been part of an ancient complex of specific cult-mythological organizational forms with wide structural ramifications.[91] In the north, this cultural pattern included the whole range of Semitic civilizations stretching from Mesopotamia to the Atlantic coast of North Africa and from Syria to South Arabia and Ethiopia. How could such complex structures, involving institutions of the state as well as the priestly orders of complex cults, have reached the people of the tropical rain forest?

The most obvious lines of communication between the Canaanite city states of North Africa and sub-Saharan Sudanic cultures were the trans-Saharan trade routes. For the pre-Christian era, rock-paintings of the Sahara attest to the wide distribution of horse-drawn chariots.[92] This means of transport may have been used on similar routes to those known with greater precision since the medieval period – albeit only for limited distances.[93] It has often been overlooked that on the central Saharan route between Tripoli and Lake Chad the geographical conditions of travelling were so favorable during the last five thousand years that in the winter period men, walking from oasis to oasis, could cross the desert without animal transport.[94] Even at the beginning of the Christian era, as the camel became widely used in the Sahara, horses continued to play an important role on these routes. Furthermore, slaves could be forced – as in the nineteenth century – to cross the entire distance from the Sudanic belt to the Mediterranean coast by foot. For these and other reasons, during this period the Sahara between Tripoli and Lake Chad should not be considered a barrier preventing contacts.

[91] For the integration of the Yoruba into the Sudanic cultural pattern, see Baumann, *Völkerkunde von Afrika*, 56-76, 295-296, and Oliver/Fage, *Short History*, 31-38, 49; for the Hausa see Lange, "Dimension", 161-203, and *id.*, "Neujahrsfest", 109-162.

[92] Law, "Garamantes", 181-185; Mauny, *Siècles obscurs*, 61-65; Lhote, *Chars*, 47-62.

[93] Mauny tried to trace the different routes used from the eleventh to the sixteenth century (*Tableau*, 430-436).

[94] Drawing from accidental written and archaeological remains, Law believes that the contacts of the Garamantes with the south mainly concerned the Tibesti and the Air mountains ("Garamantes", 197-198), while Mauny, in spite of his better knowledge of Saharan conditions, speaks of the "Saharan barrier" (*Siècles obscurs*, 16-20).

Rather, it should be seen as allowing easy and continuous travel and exchange during all periods other than summer.[95]

As for African products which might have been in demand in classical Mediterranean societies, historians think first of gold and tin.[96] Besides the fact that there were no important gold deposits in the Central Sudan, on the one hand the handling and transport of both products would not have required important trading posts. On the other hand, Phoenicians were well-known in the Mediterranean as slave capturers and traders.[97] It is therefore quite likely that they extended the frontiers of this sinister trade to countries south of the Sahara. While at the same time developing a market for slaves in the Central Sudan, the Phoenicians may also have provided various Mediterranean societies with a steady supply of black African slaves.[98] In order to organize a profitable slave raiding and slave trading network, they had to ally themselves with local people and establish well-equipped garrisons in the countries south of the Sahara. Further to the south, other societies may have been forced to provide yearly tributes of slaves.[99] Still one of the *Banzá bakwái* states in the nineteenth century Hausa system of slave recruitment, the Yoruba (of Oyo) were well known among the slavers of the Sudanic belt.[100] There is strong evidence that the ancient slave trade across the Sahara was the single most important factor contributing to the spread of Canaanite state ideas as far south as the tropical rain forest, and its subsequent adaptation to local conditions.[101] In later periods and under entirely different historical circumstances these foreign inputs were used by local people to produce their own Sudanic civilisation. Some states, like Kanem-Bornu, were able to impose in turn their domination over the Saharan oases, thus ensuring safe travel conditions and a steady flow of goods both ways through the Sahara.[102]

Postscript: From the 4th to the 10th of December 2002 the German Evangelist Reinhard Bonnke of the Pentecostal movement staged a "crusade" against the remnants of the traditional religion in Ile Ife aiming at the destruction of the

[95] Apart from the accounts of European explorers of the nineteenth century who travelled on the Central Saharan trade route – D. Denham, H. Barth, G. Rohlfs and G. Nachtigal – see also Lange/Berthoud, "Qasaba", 19-40.

[96] Gsell, *Histoire*, IV, 140-141; Huß, *Geschichte*, 486-487, 487 n. 99.

[97] V. Gsell, "Esclaves", DCPP, 157; Ameling, *Karthago*, 119-140.

[98] Bovill, *Golden Trade*, 21-23; Mattingly, *Tripolitania*, 156.

[99] On the historical dimension of West African slavery with respect to the Sudanic states see Meillassoux, *Anthropology*, 45-67.

[100] Hogben/Kirk-Greene, *Emirates*, 145-149.

[101] Shaw considers medieval slave-raiding from the north to have been the most important factor for the process of political centralization among the Yoruba (*Nigeria*, 168-170).

[102] See also above chap. XII, sec. 10.

Idita Oko grove. The king at first supported this attempt to eliminate the second most holy sanctuary of the Obatala cult. However, the determined opposition of Obalale, the head of the Obatala community, and the solidarity of all the traditional priests of Ile Ife obliged the Ooni to seek a compromise with the traditionalists. The agreement reached restricted the right of the Pentacostals to use the land of the Obatala community to one week and excluded the grove of Idita Oko from the area designated to be levelled by bulldozers in order to be used as a preaching ground. Unknown to the members of the Christian communities of Ile Ife, it formally precluded any future use of the land by the Pentacostals.[103]

Bibliography

Abbreviations:

DCPP: E. Lipinski (ed.), *Dictionnaire de civilisation phénicienne et punique*, Brepols 1992.

FN 00, 01, 02: Field notes D. Lange from the years 2000, 2001 und 2002, including names of the informants and their group affiliation.

KAI: H. Donner and W. Röllig (eds.), *Kanaanäische und aramäische Inschriften*, 3 vols., Wiesbaden 1976.

KTU: M. Dietrich *et al.* (eds.), *The Cuneiform Alphabetic Texts from Ugarit, Ras Ibn Hani and other Places*, 2nd ed. Münster 1995.

Books and Articles:

Adediran, B., "A descriptive analysis of the Ife palace organisation", *in: The African Historian* 8 (1976), 3-29.

- "The early beginnings of the Ife state", *in:* I.A. Akinjogbin (ed.), *The Cradle of a Race*, Port Harcourt 1992, 81-85.

Ademakinwa, J. A., *Ife, Cradle of the Yoruba*, 2 vols., Lagos 1958.

Ameling, W., *Karthago: Studien zu Militär, Staat und Gesellschaft*, München 1993.

Bascom, W., *The Yoruba of Southwestern Nigeria*, New York 1969.

Baudissin, W. W. v., *Adonis und Esmun: Eine Untersuchung zur Geschichte des Glaubens an Ausferstehungsgötter*, Leipzig 1911.

Baumann, H. et al., *Völkerkunde von Afrika*, Essen 1940.

Beier, U., *Yoruba Myths*, Cambridge 1980.

- *A Year of Sacred Festivals in one Yoruba Town*, Lagos 1959.

Bello, Muhammad, *Infāq al-maysūr*, ed. A. M. Gummi, Cairo 1963; transl. E. J.

[103] The account of these events given in Lange, „Preservation", 154-155, is based on information available to members of the Christian communities of Ile Ife.

Arnett, *The Rise of the Sokoto Fulani*, Kano 1922.

Bonnet, C., *Melqart: Cultes et mythes de l'Héraclès tyrien en Méditerranée*, Leuven 1988.

Bovill, E. W., *The Golden Trade of the Moors*, 2nd ed., London 1968.

Cassuto, U., "Baal and Mot in the Ugaritic Texts", *Israel Exploration Journal* 12 (1962), 77-86.

- *The Goddess Anath*, Jerusalem 1971.

Clifford, R. J., *The Cosmic Mountain in Canaan and the Old Testament*, Cambridge, Mass., 1972.

- *Creation Accounts in the Ancient Near East and in the Bible*, Washington 1994.

Daum, W., *Ursemitische Religion*, Stuttgart 1985.

Day, J., *Yahweh and the Gods and Goddesses of Canaan*, Sheffield 2000.

Ellis, A. B., *The Yoruba-Speaking Peoples*, London 1894.

Eluyemi, O., *This is Ile-Ife*, Ife 1986.

Engnell, I., *Studies in Divine Kingship in the Ancient Near East*, Oxford 1967.

Fabunmi, M. A., *Ife Shrines*, Ife 1969.

Fisher, L., "Creation at Ugarit and in the Old Testament", *Vetus Testamentum* 15 (1965), 313-324.

Fantar, M., *Le dieu de la mer chez les Phéniciens et Puniques*, Rome 1977.

Fasogbon, M. O., *Constitutional History of Ile Ife Ooyelagbo*, Lagos 1985.

Frazer, J. G., *The Dying God*, London 1913.

Frobenius, L., *Und Afrika sprach*, Berlin 1912.

- *Atlantische Götterlehre (Volksmärchen und Volksdichtungen Afrikas, Atlantis, X)*, Jena 1926.

Frymer-Kensky, T., "The tribulations of Marduk: the so-called 'Marduk ordeal text'", *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 103 (1983), 131-141.

Fulco, W. J., *The Canaanite God Reshep*, New Haven 1976.

Gaster, Th. H., *Festivals of the Jewish Year*, New York 1952.

- *Thespis*, 2nd ed., London 1961.

Gray, J., *The Legacy of Canaan*, Leiden 1965.

Grimme, H., "Der südarabische Levitismus und sein Verhältnis zum Levitismus in Israel", *Le Muséon. Revue des etudes orientales* 37 (1924), 169-199.

Gsell, S., *Histoire ancienne de l'Afrique du Nord*, 8 vols., Paris 1913-1928.

Hallgren, R., *The Good Things in Life. A Study of the Traditional Religious Culture of the Yoruba People*, Lund 1991.

Herrmann, W., "Die Frage nach Göttergruppen in der religiösen Vorstellungswelt der Kanaanäer", *Ugarit-Forschungen* 14 (1982), 93-104.

Hofner, M., "Die Stammesgruppen Nord- und Südarabiens in vorislamischer Zeit", *in:* H. W. Haussig (ed.), *Wörterbuch der Mythologie*, vol. I, Stuttgart 1965, 407-481.

- "Die vorislamischen Religionen Südarabiens", in H. Gese *et al.* (eds.), *Die Religionen Altsyriens, Altarabiens und der Mandäer*, Stuttgart 1970, 234-402.

Hogben, S. J. and A. Kirk-Greene, *The Emirates of Northern Nigeria*, London 1966.

Huß, W., *Geschichte der Karthager*, München 1985.
Hvidberg, F. F., *Weeping and Laughter in the Old Testament*, Leiden 1962.
Idowu, E. B., *Olodumare: God in Yoruba Belief*, London 1962.
Johnson, S., *History of the Yorubas*, London 1921.
Kapelrud, A. S., *The Violent Goddess: Anat in the Ras Shamra Texts*, Oslo 1969.
Keel, O., *Die Welt der altorientalischen Bildsymbolik und das Alte Testament*, 5th ed., Göttingen 1996.
Kisāʾī, *Kisas al-anbiyāʾ*, ed. I. Eisenstein, Leiden 1922; transl. W. M. Thackston, *The Tales of the Prophets*, Boston 1978.
Kühme, W., *Das Königtum von Gobir: Götter, Priester, Feste einer sakralen Gesellschaft*, Hamburg 2003.
Lange, D., "The pre-Islamic dimension of Hausa history", *Saeculum* 46 (1995), 161-204.
- "Das hebräische Erbe der Yoruba. II: Israelitische Geschichte und kanaanäischer Kult", *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 149 (1999): 79-144.
- "Das kanaanäisch-israelitische Neujahrsfest bei den Hausa", *in:* M. Kropp and A. Wagner (eds.), *Schnittpunkt Ugarit*, Frankfurt/M 1999, 109-162.
- "Jesus und das Auferstehungsfest der Yoruba", *in:* U. Engels *et al.* (eds.), *Afrika 2000, Leipzig 30. März bis 1. April 2000*, Münster, Lit, CD-ROM, 2000, 12 p.
- "Der Ursprung des Bösen: Neue Evidenzen aus Afrika, Kanaan und Israel", *in:* W. H. Ritter and J. A. Schlumberger (eds.), *Das Böse in der Geschichte*, Dettelbach 2003, 11-27.
- "Preservation of Canaanite Creation Culture in Ife", *in:* P. Probst and G. Spittler (eds.), *Between Resistance and Expansion: Dimensions of Local Vitality in Africa*, Hamburg 2004, 127-157.
- *Chaoskampf in Ife* (forthcoming).
Lange, D. and S. Berthoud, "Al-Qaṣaba et d'autres villes de la route centrale du Sahara", *Paideuma* 23 (1977), 19-40.
Law, R., "The Garamantes and trans-Saharan enterprise in classical times", *Journal of African History* 8 (1967), 181-200.
- *The Oyo Empire c. 1600 to c. 1836*, Oxford 1977.
- "How many times can history repeat itself? Some problems in the traditional history of Oyo", *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 18 (1985), 33-51.
Lhote, H., *Les chars rupestres sahariens*, Toulouse 1982.
Lipiński, E., "La fête de l'ensevelissement et de la résurrection de Melqart", in: A. Finet (ed.), *Actes de la XVIIème Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale*, Ham-sur-Heure, 1970, 30-58.
- *Dieux et déesses de l'univers phénicien et punique*, Leuven 1995.
Loretz, O., *Ugarit und die Bibel*, Darmstadt 1990.
Lucas, O., *The Religion of the Yorubas*, Lagos 1948.
Mattingly, D. J., *Tripolitania*, London 1995.
Mauny, R., *Tableau géographique de l'Ouest Africain au moyenâge*, Dakar 1961.
- *Siècles obscurs de l'Afrique Noire*, Paris 1970.

Meissner, B., *Babylonien und Assyrien*, 2 vols., Heidelberg 1920, 1925.
Meillassoux, Cl., *The Anthropology of Slavery: The Womb of Iron and Gold*, Chicago 1991.
Mettinger, T. N. D., *The Riddle of Resurrection: "Dying and Rising gods" in the Ancient Near East*, Stockholm 2001.
Mishnah, transl. J. Neusner, New Haven 1988.
Moor, J. de, *New Year with Canaanites and Israelites*, 2 vols., Kampen 1972.
- *An Anthology of Religious Texts from Ugarit*, Leiden 1987.
Mowinckel, S., *The Psalms in Israels Worship*, Oxford 1962.
Obayemi, H. M., "The Yoruba and the Edo speaking peoples and their neighbours before 1600 A.D.", *in* J. Ajayi and M. Crowder (eds.), *History of West Africa*, vol. I, 3rd ed., Harlow 1985, 255-322.
Ojutalayo, O. O., *Orisa Itapa (Obatala) in Ile-Ife*, Ife University, Yoruba Department, Long Essay 1981.
Olmo Lete, G. del, *Canaanite Religion According to the Liturgical Texts of Ugarit*, Bethesda 1999.
Pallis, A., *The Babylonian Akitu Festival*, Kopenhagen 1926.
Pardee, D., *Textes rituels*, 2 vols., Paris 2000.
- *Ritual and Cult in Ugarit*, Leiden 2002.
Parrat, J. K., "An approach to Ife festivals", *Nigeria Magazine* 100 (1969), 340-348.
Pemberton, J. and F. S. Afolayan, *Yoruba Sacred Kingship "A Power Like That of the Gods"*, Washington 1996.
Pope, M., *El in the Ugaritic Texts*, Leiden 1955.
Shaw, Th., *Nigeria - Its Archaeology and Early History*, London 1978.
Smith, J., Z., "Dying and rising gods", *in* M. Eliade (ed.), *The Encyclopaedia of Religion*, vol. IV, London 1987, 521-527.
Smith, M. S., *The Ugaritic Baal Cycle*, vol. I, Leiden 1994.
- *The Origins of Biblical Monotheism*, Oxford 2001.
Smith, R., *Kingdoms of the Yoruba*, 3rd ed., London 1988.
Soden, W. von, "Gibt es ein Zeugnis dafür, dass die Babylonier an die Wiederauferstehung Marduks geglaubt haben?", *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie* 51 (1955), 130-166.
Stevens, Ph., "Orisha nla festival", *Nigeria Magazine*, 90 (1966), 184-199.
Tabari, *Taʾrikh ar-rusul waʾl-muluk*, vol. I, ed. M. J. de Goeje, Leiden 1879; *History of al-Tabari*, vol. II, transl. W. M. Brinner, Albany 1987.
Verger, P., "Ipgbo festival", *Nigeria Magazine* 70 (1970), 206-217.
Walsh, M. J., "Edi festival at Ile-Ife", *African Affairs* 47 (1948), 231-238.
Wellhausen, J., *Prolegomena zur Geschichte Israels*, 2nd ed., Berlin 1883.
Widengren, G., *Sakrales Königtum im Alten Testament und im Judentum*, Stuttgart 1955.
Willett, F., *Ife in the History of West African Sculpure*, London 1967.
Wyatt, N., *Religious Texts from Ugarit*, Sheffield 1998.
Yon, M., *La cité d'Ougarit sur le tell de Ras Shamra*, Paris 1997.
Zimmern, H., *Das babylonische Neujahrsfest*, Leipzig 1926.

d'une vaste opération militaire des Almoravides. En effet, cet événement semble avoir eu des répercussions considérables sur toutes les traditions dynastiques ultérieures de Gao. Sonni 'Alī et Askia Muḥammad, en particulier, les deux grands souverains de l'État songhay, se réclamaient l'un comme l'autre d'une origine ṣanhādjienne, bien qu'en fait ils appartiennent, comme on sait, à deux dynasties différentes.[142]

Néanmoins, les conséquences à long terme de la rupture dynastique, intervenue à l'époque almoravide, ne doivent pas faire oublier que des indices assez sûrs suggèrent que les nouveaux rois étaient issus de la communauté locale des commerçants et convoyeurs de caravanes. L'établissement de cette communauté à Gao-Sané remontait peut-être au temps de la fondation du royaume de Gawgaw lui-même.

Quant à l'identité ethnique des rois de Gao-Sané il faut surtout considérer le nom de Zāghē qui figure sur plusieurs épitaphes royales de Gao-Sané et qui semble désigner l'ancêtre éponyme du nouveau groupe dynastique. Ce nom, de même que la tradition yéménite enrégistrée par les chroniqueurs du XVII[e] siècle, font penser que les nouveaux maîtres de Gao étaient des Berbères. En revanche, les épitaphes en nombre presque égal dédiées à des reines et des princesses semblent se rapporter à des descendantes de la dynastie antérieure. On peut en effet estimer que l'exécution des plus anciennes et des plus belles stèles de Gao-Sané avait deux objectifs : d'une part il s'agissait d'attester le caractère profondément islamique des nouveaux rois, et d'autre part il fallait insister sur la volonté des usurpateurs de se réconcilier avec l'ancien clan royal. Ce rapprochement des deux forces politiques semble également ressortir de la reconnaissance, de la part des nouveaux rois, du caractère islamique de la dynastie précédante, reconnaissance que l'on pourrait être tenté d'induire à partir de la référence indirecte à l'existence d'un premier Muḥammad (Kotso).

Dès lors il pourrait surprendre que les rois de Gao-Sané affichaient leur origine berbère. En fait, on peut supposer que cette insistance sur la différence qui les séparait sur le plan ethnique de la population négro-africaine exprime moins le désir d'afficher une origine étrangère que la volonté de préserver une identité ethnique menacée par la politique d'intermariage. A la longue l'avènement d'une dynastie berbère devait contribuer à effacer le clivage entre les Négro-Africains de Gao ancien et les Sahariens et Nord-Africains de Gao-Sané. Si l'on peut admettre que le titre de Za fut déjà porté par les Kanta, il serait tentant d'interpréter la substitution du nom de Zā à celui de Zāghē vers le milieu du XIII[e] siècle et l'apparition, à la même époque, du titre de Zā comme signes de la dernière étape d'un long processus d'indigénisation. Les traditions zarma avec leur insistance sur une origine malienne montrent à leur tour que la redéfinition de l'identité ethnique des Zāghē eut des effets durables.

S'il faut écarter l'hypothèse que les changements politiques survenus à Gao furent provoqués par une conquête militaire, comment doit-on dès lors envisager le processus qui provoqua la chute des Kanta? Dans la mesure où le facteur religieux joua certainement un rôle important dans les événements qui se déroulerent vers 1080 à Gao, on supposera qu'au départ il y eut un mouvement de révolte religieuse instigué par des fervents musulmans de Gao-Sané et amplifié par les musulmans de la cour des Kanta. Une faction

[142] La mise en évidence de ces répercussions fera l'objet d'un prochain article.

de la dynastie des Kanta, de tendance plus musulmane que les dirigeants, était peut-être également favorable à un changement politique.

Mais il serait sans doute erroné de voir dans cette agitation religieuse un phénomene purement local. Le synchronisme des événements du Ghana et du Kanem fait supposer que des propagandistes almoravides contribuerent largement à attiser les ferveurs religieuses parmi les musulmans résidants dans les capitales des royaumes soudanais. Une telle participation ne signifie pas pour autant que les nouveaux dirigeants, vraisemblablement partout issus des milieux berberes locaux, étaient par la suite considerés comme des représentants des Almoravides d'Abū Bakr b. 'Umar (mort en 1087). Même si cela fut momentanément le cas – ce qui est peu probable pour le Kanem – il est assez invraisemblable que les successeurs du grand dirigeant almoravide aient eu l'autorité suffisante pour peser sur les décisions des dirigeants locaux. Le flechissement de la ferveur religieuse devait a son tour contribuer à ce que les réalités politiques locales fassent rapidement passer le principe de la solidarité musulmane au second plan.

SUMMARY

In recent years the impact of the Almoravid movement on the sahelian societies has been the object of some debate. Ancient Ghana seemed to be the most rewarding area of investigation, since al-Zuhrī (1154) and Ibn Khaldūn (end of the fourteenth century) suggested its 'conquest' by Almoravid forces. The evidence provided by these narrative sources has been disputed, but it could not be discarded.

A new field of investigation was opened by the discovery in 1939 of a number of royal tombstones in Gao-Sane close to the old capital of the Gawgaw empire. The dates of the epitaphs extend from the early twelfth to the late thirteenth century. However, none of the Arabic names given to the rulers of Gao-Sane seemed to correspond to any of the names provided in the chronicles of Timbuktu, the *T. al-Sudan* and the *T. al-Fattash*. A closer look at the epitaphs shows that the third ruler of Gao-Sane, called 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb and also Yāmā b. Kimā and who died in 1120, is in fact identical with Yama Kitsi mentioned in the chronicles. The available evidence suggests that by 1080 the local Berbers of Gao-Sane were able to seize power from the earlier Qanda-Kanta dynasty of Old Gao. This change of dynasty was certainly not the result of a military conquest, although it is likely that Almoravid propagandists contributed to arouse the religious fervour of the local Muslims in both Gao-Sané with its community of traders and Old Gao with its Islamic court members and dynastic factions. The clear message of the Gao epitaphs is that the new rulers of Gao-Sane, the Zāghē, tried to establish good relations with members of the former ruling clan resorting to a policy of intermarriage. By the middle of the thirteenth century the Zāghē rulers were so much integrated into the local Mande societs that they adopted the title Z.wā (Zā) which was originally the title of the Kanta rulers. Thus it would appear that in spite of the far-reaching dynastic effects resulting from the religious and political upheaval of the Almoravid period, there was no major incursion of Berber people into the kingdom of Gawgaw. Indeed, there are reasons to believe that the basic institutions of the original 'Mande' societs were destroyed only in the course of the fifteenth century, when Songhay warrior groups from the east under the leadership of the Sonni radically changed the ethnic set-up of the Middle Niger. In spite of these changes the Zarma, whose aristocracy descend from the Zā, preserve the tradition of their origin from Mali until the present day.

Journal of African History, 35 (1994) pp. 275–301

FROM MANDE TO SONGHAY: TOWARDS A POLITICAL AND ETHNIC HISTORY OF MEDIEVAL GAO*

BY DIERK LANGE
University of Bayreuth

THE study of the medieval kingdom of Gao has greatly benefited from the discovery in 1939 of a number of royal epitaphs at Gao-Sané. Earlier it was virtually impossible to assess the validity of the kinglist and traditions of origin included in the *Ta'rīkhs*, the voluminous Songhay chronicles from Timbuktu. In particular no synchronism could be established for the time before the Askiyas (1493–1591) and no clearly recognizable periods of early Gao history were apparent. In fact, it was impossible to discover behind the mist of legends and the unevocative names of the Gao kinglist the bare features of dynastic history: not only did the foundation of the kingdom remain a mystery but it was also difficult to distinguish between the Zā rulers and the Sunnis and to perceive any upheavals within the reign of either dynasty.

The Orientalist Jean Sauvaget was the first to study the royal epitaphs of Gao-Sané. From comparison with similar stelae found in Almeria he deduced that the early twelfth-century stelae had been sent to order from Southern Spain to Gao on the R. Niger. Suggesting therefore that the rulers of Gao-Sané were in contact with the Almoravids he at first thought that the kings of the epitaphs were identical with the Zās of the Gao kinglist,[1] but later saw them as subordinate kinglets of the Zās.[2]

John Hunwick, who has specialized in Songhay history, rejected the idea that the rulers of Gao-Sané were identical with the Zās.[3] In his opinion the new rulers of Gao were Ṣanhāja offshoots of the southern Almoravid movement who had invaded and conquered parts of the Gao kingdom. He suggested that the Zās were first established on the right bank of the Niger, only crossing to the left bank after the Ṣanhāja had moved further east.[4]

My own conclusions were published three years ago in this *Journal*. I suggested that the rulers of Gao-Sané were local Berber traders who on the basis of Islam and in connection with the Almoravid movement had seized power in Gao. The new rulers were in my opinion identical with the early Muslim kings of the Zā dynasty mentioned in the Gao kinglist. I further

* I am grateful to Gabrielle Shortland for stylistic corrections.

[1] J. Sauvaget, 'Notes préliminaires sur les épitaphes royales de Gao', *Revue des Études Islamiques* (1948), 7–8.

[2] Idem, 'Les épitaphes royales de Gao', *Al-Andalus*, XIV (1949), 123–41 (same article published in *Bulletin de l'IFAN*, XII (1950), 418–40).

[3] J. O. Hunwick, 'Gao and the Almoravids: a hypothesis', in B. Swartz and R. Dumett (eds.), *West African Culture Dynamics* (The Hague, 1980), 251–75.

[4] *Idem*, *Sharī'a in Songhay: the Replies of al-Maghīlī to the Questions of Askia al-Ḥājj Muḥammad* (Oxford, 1985), 9–10.

argued that the original Zā kings were Mande and that the rise of the Berber Zāghē did not change the ethnic set-up of the Gao kingdom. The Mande institutions of medieval Gao were in my opinion transformed by incoming Sorko and given a Songhay overlay in the fifteenth century.[5]

In his critical assessment of my contribution published in this issue of the *Journal of African History*, John Hunwick deals mainly with my suggestion that the medieval Gao kingdom was basically a Mande state. He dismisses the evidence in favour of the Mande identity of the original Zās (without having considered the Zarma traditions of origin) and discards my proposal that the coming of the Songhay was a consequence of the rise of the fifteenth century Sunnis. Following Maurice Delafosse and other authorities he places the coming of the Songhay in the predynastic period and maintains that the original homeland of the Songhay was in Dendi, not very far downstream from Gao. Kukiya-Bentia near the present border of Mali and Niger was supposedly the capital of the first Songhay chiefdom.[6]

In my present reply I first deal with the identification of the rulers of Gao-Sané. Having little to add to what I earlier wrote, I attempt to correct the errors made by my critic. Turning next to the question of the dynastic situation in medieval Gao I try to show that the Sunnis rose to power in the Almoravid period and that the Malian Zās continued to play an important role in the Gao state within the framework of a dual kingship. I further suggest that the final fall of the Zās from power at the beginning of the fifteenth century was the result of a military intervention of Kebbi (Old Songhay) in support of the Sunnis. Building on this reconstruction of the political history of Gao I argue that the introduction of Songhay speech and culture was mainly the consequence of a massive arrival of Sorko troops under the command of Kebbi governors. Towards the middle of the fifteenth century the Sunnis were able to assert their authority over the Sorko.

In reaching these tentative conclusions, which are based on the outline provided in my first article, I try to focus on historical reality rather than confining my attention to isolated problems of identification. By over-stressing the hypothetical nature of historical reconstructions, Hunwick gives the impression of being reluctant to take up any firm position with respect to the political and ethnic changes reflected in the sources under discussion. It is difficult to imagine how any progress in our understanding of medieval Africa can be achieved without the willingness to attempt the reconstruction of whatever history can be recovered.

1. THE IDENTIFICATION OF YĀMĀ B. KIMĀ (1110–1120) AS A KING OF THE ZĀS

John Hunwick starts the relevant section of his 'Gao revisited' by calling the third king of Gao-Sané by the name Māmā b. K.mā, a reading which differs from mine which is Yāmā b. K.mā. It should be made clear that this name is of outstanding importance since the epitaphs identify the other rulers only

[5] D. Lange, 'Les rois de Gao-Sané et les Almoravides', *J. Afr. Hist.*, xxxii (1991), 251–75.

[6] John Hunwick, 'Gao and the Almoravids revisited: ethnicity, political change and the limits of interpretation', *J. Afr. Hist.*, xxxv (1994), 251–73.

by assumed Arabic names. With the reading Yāmā, the only available synchronism for the medieval history of the Middle Niger and with it all attempts to relate the rise of the Almoravid Berbers to the indigenous history of the Middle Niger stand or fall.

To follow the argument the reader should know that the epitaphs of Gao-Sané were written in Kufic, a monumental script which not only omits the vowelling, as is normal for Arabic, but often also the points on or under the so-called *nabra*. Therefore a letter intended to be a *yā'* may be read also as *bā'*, *nūn*, *tā'* or *thā'*. This is rarely a problem for meaningful items of the language, since the correct sense may normally be deduced from the context. It creates, however, serious obstacles in the reading of unfamiliar names. In our case Sauvaget, who was working on the basis of rather poor transcripts, read the first letter as a *mim* and not as a *nabra*, hence the name Māmā. Later M. Viré, with the aid of photographs of the epitaphs, was able to recognize the first letter as a *nabra* which excludes the reading Māmā. Since she was uncertain how to interpret the *nabra*, she chose, on the basis of the female name Nmī, attested among the corpus of Gao-Sané epitaphs for the twelfth century, the *nūn* as being the letter most likely intended. Hence she suggested the reading Nāmā.[7] Then Paulo Farias published the epitaph of a thirteenth-century prince of Gao-Sane bearing the male name Yāmā Kūrī b. *al-malik* Zwā.[8] On the basis of this name – which obviously provides a better paradigm for reading our name than the female name Nmī – I suggested in my article that the correct reading was Yāmā b. K.mā (p. 264).

Hunwick criticizes me for having based my identification on a misquote of Farias, in which respect he is partly correct since this author indeed deals only with Yāmā Kūrī and not with Yāmā b. K.mā. However, the point I wanted to make was that the new reading of Yāmā Kūrī by Farias (instead of Nāmā Kūrī) provides the only valid paradigm for reading the questionable name as Yāmā. Hunwick seizes the minor mistake of reference and further suggests that both paradigms, Yāmā Kūrī (Farias) and N.mī *bint* Swā (Viré) are equivalent. But these paradigms are not equally valid: one is the name of an apparently non-royal woman (*bint* [*fulān*]) while the other is the name of a man who was the son of a king (*ibn al-malik*). Furthermore the form of the name Yāmā (Kūrī) is closer to what we find on our epitaph since both have in the second position an *alif* which stands for a long vowel, while N.mī can either be read Namī, Nimī or Numī and has always a short vowel in the second position.

At the end of his discussion of the paradigm Hunwick reaches the rather confused conclusion (p. 268)

> The case for reading the name as Yāmā is no better and no worse [sic], since we have a parallel in the later inscription examined by Farias in which the initial letter is clearly yā (Yāmā) and not *nūn* (Nāmā) as Sauvaget had originally suggested.

In actual fact it is precisely the thirteenth-century name Yāmā Kūrī provided by Farias which makes the reading Yāmā preferable to Nāmā (Māmā being in any case discarded). It may be noted that in the course of his discussion

[7] M. Viré, 'Notes sur trois epitaphes royales de Gao', *Bulletin de l'IFAN*, xx (1958), 173 n. 2.

[8] P. F. de Moraes Farias, 'Du nouveau sur les steles de Gao: les epitaphes du prince Yāmā Kūrī et du roi F.n.dā (XIII^e siecle)', *Bulletin de l'IFAN*, xxvi (1974), 516–17.

Hunwick has moved from a position where he identifies the ruler as Māmā b. K.mā to a position where he accepts the reading Yāmā (b. K.mā) 'as a working hypothesis'. However, it is clear from what follows that he is unwilling to 'work' on the basis of this hypothesis.

Let us now turn to the particular name given in the kinglist to the eighteenth ruler of the Zās. Hunwick says correctly that I identify Yāmā b. K.mā from the Gao-Sané epitaphs with Yama Kitsi of the *T. al-Fattāsh* (or, more precisely, with the second appendix of the TF known as 'Notice historique' [NH]),[9] but he neglects to say that my identification is also based on Biyu-Kī-Kīma, the name given for the same ruler in the *T. al-Sūdān* (TS),[10] although I clearly stated this.[11] Now, instead of examining the arguments which support the identification, my critic refers to 'a number of problems' arising from my suggestion of which he actually mentions only one, namely that in the *Ta'rīkhs* Yāmā b. K.mā appears to be the fourth Muslim ruler of Gao, while according to the epitaphs he was the third.

My explanation of this difference is based on a comparison of the two series of names, that of the kinglist and that of the epitaphs. The kinglist has Biyu-Kī-Kīma/Yama-Kitsi in the eighteenth position of the Zā kings and in the fourth position of the Muslim rulers. The epitaphs begin with Muḥammad b. 'Abd Allāh and continue with Abū Bakr b. Abī Quḥāfa and 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb, the names of the first two Caliphs, a series supported by the dates. We cannot suppose that an epitaph is missing before that of Muḥammad b. 'Abd Allāh, a name which must stand for the Prophet Muḥammad – since obviously there was no Muslim ruler before Muḥammad. Therefore, if Yāmā b. K.mā is identical to Biyu-Kī-Kima/Yama-Kitsi (no. 18), the first Muslim ruler of the Almoravid period must have been Kosso-Dārē (no. 16) and not Kosso-Muslim (no. 15). Hence we are left with the problem of knowing who Kosso-Muslim (no. 15) was. Taking into account that the tenth-century king of Gao mentioned by al-Muhallabī was a Muslim and that the kinglist mentions only the Islamization of the Almoravid period I suggested that Kosso-Muslim may have been the first Muslim king of Gao. For want of a better explanation I argued that here we are faced with a conscious rearrangement of the kinglist: a long time after the Almoravid period, when folk memory had begun to think of the two dynasties of Gao as one, court historians may have merged the early (tenth century) and the late (Almoravid) Islamization by placing Kosso-Muslim (no. 15) before Kosso-Dārē (no. 16).

Focusing once more on the name in dispute we find in our sources the following three forms:

Yāmā b. K.mā – third king of Gao-Sané (died 18/4/1120) (*epitaph*)
Yama Kitsi – eighteenth king/fourth Muslim king of the Zās (TF)
Biyu-Kī-Kīma – eighteenth king/fourth Muslim king of the Zās (TS)

Clearly, the first half of the name preserved in the TF (NH) corresponds to the proper name of the third ruler of Gao-Sané while the second half preserved in the name of the TS corresponds to the name of his father. If we add to these phonological similarities the similarities in position and time

[9] Eds. and transl. O. Houdas and M. Delafosse (Paris, 1913).
[10] Eds. and transl. O. Houdas (Paris, 1898–1900).
[11] Lange, 'Gao-Sané', 264; see also n. 85.

(TF) we may indeed assert that the kings of Gao-Sané figure among the Zā rulers of the Gao kinglist.

Hunwick obviously doubts the possibility of a correct transmission of a series of royal names over many centuries. In doing so he forgets that we know nothing precise about the history of the Gao kinglist. With the copies preserved in the mid-seventeenth-century *Ta'rīkhs* of Timbuktu we have the only tangible proof that such a kinglist existed. But once Islam was established as the official religion of Gao, Arabic writing was easily available. Why should the *jesere dunka*, who probably was the official court historian,[12] not have seized such an opportunity to preserve the list of royal names? This was all the more important when the court wanted to establish a particular vision of the past which did not correspond to historical reality – as for instance giving prominence to the Zāghē rulers rather than their pre-Almoravid predecessors by merging the two instances of 'Islamization' and giving the main credit for it to the Zāghē. If one takes into account the important function of kinglists in semi-literate societies this possibility is certainly realistic.

There is another point where Hunwick is correct in criticizing a detail and wrong in his further inferences. He points out that I failed to recognize that Abū 'Abd Allāh is a *kunya* (agnomen) of Muḥammad (p. 269). However, the use of the full name of the Prophet Muḥammad actually emphasizes my point that Kosso-Dārē was considered locally to be comparable to the Prophet Muḥammad insofar as he ushered in a new era. The use of the agnomen is in line with the naming of his two successors on the other epitaphs. In each case the name includes the personal name of the Caliph and the name of his father. In focusing on a minor aspect of my discussion, Hunwick turns this point into a major argument against my so-called 'theory of name correspondence' while in actual fact it supports it.

I come now to the conclusion which my critic draws from the supposed shortcomings of my analysis and the 'number of problems it unnecessarily created'.

> The theory of name correspondence [...] is based on extremely slender evidence: a possible reading of one name and its putative identification with a ruler's name that we only know from one mid-seventeenth-century chronicle, and that only in its French translation![13]

The reader may judge whether this conclusion provides a proper assessment of the earliest synchronism available for West African history. By discarding off-hand and against better evidence the identification of Yāmā b. K.mā, he misses the only possibility of correlating the internal with the external evidence.[14]

[12] In the TF the *jesere dunka* is several times quoted as an important informant (94, 155/11, 177, 270, n. a, 11 (r. 14)).
[13] 'Gao revisited', 270. The reference is here to the TF (NH).
[14] On the other hand I was glad to notice that Hunwick accepted several of my suggestions, although he should have acknowledged the source of his reformulation of the conjural theory instead of implying that these ideas are his own. (1) the Zāghē were part of the Ṣanhāja diaspora – and therefore apparently not invading foreigners ('Gao revisited', 269, 'Gao-Sané', 266–7); (2) the Zāghē may have been absorbed into the local community ('Gao revisited', 252, 'Gao-Sané', 265); (3) the succession of the early Zāghē kings was non-dynastic ('Gao revisited', 265, 'Gao-Sané', 263).

The following list summarizes the steps which lead to the identification of Yāmā b. Kimā. It also indicates some of the implications derived from this identification with respect to our understanding of the Gao kinglist.

1. We have three epitaphs for the early rulers of Gao-Sané. All three give assumed Arabic names to these rulers. It is only the last epitaph which has a supplementary indigenous name. Only the latter could be expected to have been transmitted by the local tradition to posterity.

2. On the basis of a later paradigm the indigenous name should be read Yāmā b. K.mā. Only the first letter is slightly doubtful, but the reading *mīm* (Māmā) instead of *yā'* (Yāmā) has to be discarded.

3. The first part of the name – Yāmā – is identical with the first half of the name given in the TF to the eighteenth ruler of the Zās, Yama Kitsi.

4. There is no reason to doubt the validity of the French translation of the second appendix of the TF (the Arabic text being at present not available). We owe this translation to O. Houdas, the same scholar who earlier translated the TS. As far as I can see, none of the names of the 31 Zā rulers and the 19 Sunni rulers of the TS reveals any mistake in their respective transcriptions.

5. The identification of Yāmā b. K.mā is not only based on the TF but also on the TS. The second part of the name Yāmā b. K.mā is here identical with the second half of the name of the eighteenth Zā ruler – Biyu-Kī-Kīma (TF: Yama Kitsi). Furthermore the *Ta'rīkhs* provide us with the vowel for the second name – a *kasra* (i) – which is missing in the epitaph (the short consonants showing in any case no vowels).

6. On the basis of the available elements we are now able to read the name of the eighteenth ruler of the Zās on the epitaph as Yāmā b. Kimā. It is obvious from this contemporary source that the later kinglist has merged the personal name with the name of the father.

7. Both available copies of the kinglist are known from the *Ta'rīkhs*. We can be sure that these chronicles were composed in the mid-seventeenth century but nothing proves that the kinglist was also recorded in writing only at that late period. On the contrary, now that the eighteenth king of the Zās can be dated to the Almoravid period, we must suppose that the Gao kinglist had been committed to writing much earlier.

In view of these elements there can hardly be any doubt that the third king of Gao-Sané, Yāmā b. K.mā, is indeed identical with the eighteenth Zā – or the fourth Muslim Zā – of the kinglist. The combination of the available

---

Hunwick also claims ideas of other scholars as his own: the seventh/eighth century expansion of the Songhay from Dendi to Gao ('Gao revisited', 272; see also 256) was first suggested by Delafosse (Haut-Sénégal-Niger [2 vols.] [Paris, 1912] i, 239–41) and the relations between Gao and Almeria – whether involving kinsmen or not – were pointed out by Sauvaget ('Gao revisited', 264; 'epitaphes', 132–3).

For the sake of clarity Hunwick should have stated further that now he accepts 'the name correspondence' between the Zāghē rulers and the Orthodox Caliphs which he had first rejected ('Gao and the Almoravids', 416). He should also have admitted that he no longer sees in the epitaphs of queens evidence for a foreign matrilineal society (ibid. 429). Had he furthermore given some consideration to the parallel epitaphs of kings and queens ('Gao-Sané', 261–2) surely a policy of intermarriage would have seemed a more likely explanation than a foreign conquest involving not only an invading army but also a retinue of women.

elements suggests that this ruler was in fact called Yāmā b. Kimā, Kimā being the name of his father. The order of succession must have been non-dynastic – as suggested by the assumed Arabic names – since none of the *Ta'rīkhs* have Kimā among the immediate predecessors of Yāmā.

On the basis of the identification of Yāmā b. K.mā the first three kings of Gao-Sané may now be dated as follows:

Kosso-Dārē	c. 1080–6 November 1100
Hizka-Zunku-Dam	November 1100–1 January 1110
Yāmā b. Kimā	January 1100–18 April 1120

II. HISTORICAL RECONSTRUCTION

Two main events should be distinguished in the pre-Askiya history of Gao: the rise of the Zāghē dynasty in the time of the Almoravids and the coming of the Songhay during either the predynastic period or the fifteenth century. Both events are considered by Hunwick in isolation from the mainstream of Gao history, while I see them as disruptions producing important and lasting changes in the riverine society of the eastern Niger bend. The rise of the Zāghē kings of Gao-Sané led in my opinion to the eclipse of the Zās and to the implantation of a new royal clan, but it did not annihilate the Mande dynasty, nor did it change the Mande identity of the society. Hunwick on the other hand believes that the Ṣanhāja conquest of Gao had no lasting effect on the further history of the Gao kingdom, since the Ṣanhāja kings are supposed to have disappeared in one way or another in the course of the twelfth century.

Our disagreement is more pronounced with respect to the overall ethnic identity of the pre-Askiya Gao society. I briefly argued in my previous paper that prior to the fifteenth century the eastern Niger bend was part of the Mande world and that the Mande identity of the people was changed only at the beginning of the fifteenth century by the incoming Sorko (pp. 255–6, 269–73). My arguments were based on four sets of evidence: information on ethnic groups provided in the external sources, names given in the Gao kinglist, anthropological survivals and present-day oral traditions. Trying to defend the established theory of tribal stability Hunwick deals at length with the Wangara and the Zaghāy of the external sources but distorts the evidence provided by Ibn Khaldūn, our main source, and misinterprets the relevant data of al-Idrīsī and Ibn Baṭṭūṭa. He examines my linguistic arguments derived from the Gao kinglist but dismisses them as being less significant than a folk etymology of the name 'Gao'. He neglects anthropological survivals and ignores the traditions of origins, although I had already pointed out their importance for determining the origins of the Zarma and the Sorko (pp. 269–70, 272). Altogether it would appear that the ethnogenesis of African people cannot be dealt with adequately on the basis of external sources alone. It is indispensable to take oral traditions and kinglists into account and to analyse them thoroughly. Above all one must attempt to correlate the internal and the external evidence: without the dating provided by external sources there is hardly any chance of disentangling the manifold threads of oral traditions dealing with origins. Needless to say, nothing can be achieved without an open mind.

Hunwick claims that his contribution was written in a spirit of collegiality.

Therefore I am inclined to disregard the subtle criticism underlying his response. However, it cannot go without note that he criticizes me for not applying the appropriate linguistic methodology when dealing with apparently cognate names in different sources (p. 253). Obviously the historian of medieval Africa has to rely on onomastic data – and these may be widely disparate – in order to relate key elements of the internal evidence to the evidence provided by external sources. Indeed, it should be clear that even completely different names may refer to the same historical reality. To dismiss possible correlations off-hand on the sole criterion of linguistic form would deprive historical research of important possibilities for advancement. Although there is no absolute safeguard against the pitfalls of speculation and circular reasoning, the investigator of onomastic data should consider the general plausibility of the resemblance between individual terms by taking into account their meaning and the historical context. I hope that I did this and that I moved on the narrow path of a fruitful approach towards a better understanding of early Gao history. May I now turn the tables on Hunwick? Throughout my present paper I have to note many shortcomings of his own analysis. These shortcomings are in my opinion mainly due to an overall defensive approach towards new suggestions, understandable in a field where we are accustomed to struggle for years without in-depth responses from outsiders. Nevertheless, his reply has considerably sharpened my understanding of medieval Gao and will certainly encourage other scholars to find better solutions to the many problems facing us.

In order to make the following discussion as clear as possible I will try to proceed more or less chronologically, beginning with the pre-Almoravid Qandā rulers of Old Gao and ending with the re-establishment of the Sunnis as the effective rulers of Gao. However, the need to respond to the criticisms voiced by Hunwick leads me to deal with topics which overlap successive periods: the question of the site of the first capital of the Gao kingdom concerns the Qandā as well as the Zāghē/Sunni period; the same holds true for the impact of Ghana/Old Mali on Gao; the section on the Sango kingdom explores the common features of the old West African kingdoms as well as the identification of the first Songhay polity; the fourth section proposes a new interpretation of the dynastic history of the Gao kingdom in relation to the Malian expansion of the fourteenth century and the coming of the Songhay in the fifteenth century. These various topics are all in one way or another related to the stand taken towards the epitaphs of Gao-Sané and the question of Songhay ethnicity, the two central aspects of Hunwick's criticism. I deal with these topics on the basis of the brief outline provided in my Gao-Sané article. But the attempt to counter the arguments of my critic leads me to explore the history of fourteenth- and fifteenth-century Songhay in more depth than I had first intended. By and large the outcome of this undertaking is a revision of most of the concepts which were underlying the previous reconstructions of the pre-Askiya history of the Gao kingdom.

1. *'Right-bank Gao' and the rise of the Zāghē*

On the basis of the *TF (NH)* Hunwick suggests that sometime prior to the twelfth century the Zā moved from the right bank to the left bank of the Niger. Supplementary evidence for such a move seems to be provided by al-

Muhallabī and Ibn al-Warrāq/al-Bakrī (pp. 265–67). My analysis of the Gao kinglist in conjunction with the Gao-Sané epitaphs suggests that a new dynasty, the Zāghē, came to power towards 1080. The residence of the Zāghē kings was in Gao-Sané. In 1154 al-Idrīsī confirms that the rulers of Gao were not residing on the banks of the 'Nile', but close to a canal (*khalīdj*) or an affluent of the 'Nile'.[16] This statement corroborates my point that in the mid-twelfth century the rulers were residing in Gao-Sané.

There are reasons to suppose that the seat of power of the pre-Almoravid Qandā was in Old Gao on the left bank of the Niger. No remains of a medieval site of a town have been discovered on the right bank and the narrow hinterland makes the area opposite to present-day Gao a very inappropriate site for an important locality. Furthermore such a site would have been very difficult to reach for foreign traders.

Two Arabic geographers seem to support the idea of an early residence of the Qandā on the right bank of the Niger, but the comparative interpretation of all the evidence provided by the external sources makes it likely that this reading is wrong. Al-Muhallabī distinguishes between the town of the king on the eastern bank of the Niger and a town of the traders, Sarnāh (Gao-Sané), on the western bank, and he places a prayer-ground (*muṣallā*) between the two towns.[16] If indeed the towns were situated on opposite banks of the Niger, a prayer-ground in the middle would make no sense since there is no island. It makes sense however between Gao-Sane (Sarnāh) and Old Gao, two localities which are separated by the Wādī Gangeber. The large delta of the Gangeber (see map in 'Gao-Sane', p. 259) suggests that during a period of wetter climate the present dry-bed of the Gangeber might at this point have been flooded on a large scale by the R. Niger. Al-Bakrī also distinguishes between two towns and he makes it clear that the king's town was situated on the banks of the Niger, but he does not say that the two towns were separated by the 'Nile'.[17] It is only in connection with the Saghmāra-Berbers and the town of Tadmekka that he places Gao 'on the opposite bank [of the Niger?]' referring the reader to his later description of the town.[18] However, at the point where he provides this description of Gao he neither mentions that the two parts of the town were separated by the Nile/Niger, nor does he indicate that traders had to cross a large river before reaching the king's town. Therefore it seems quite possible that both geographers were misled by traders' reports mentioning 'the crossing of a river' which they interpreted as 'crossing the Nile/Niger' although actually these reports meant that 'the Gangeber flooded by the Niger' had to be crossed. This interpretation is supported by al-Zuhrī who in 1154 states that Old Gao – now certainly identical with left-bank Gao – was situated on an island in the middle of the R. Niger and that it could be reached only by boat.[19] It would seem that al-Zuhrī provides us with a useful paradigm for understanding the texts of the earlier geographers. He writes in the middle of the twelfth century, i.e. at a time when, according to Hunwick, the rulers of right-bank Gao had already moved to left-bank Gao. But still he describes Gao as being located on an island, a statement which would seem to imply that the Nile/Niger had to be crossed. This information does not suit Hunwick's line

[16] J. Hopkins and N. Levtzion, *Corpus of Early Arabic Sources for West African History* (Cambridge, 1981), 113 [hereafter, *Corpus*]. [17] *Corpus*, 174. [18] *Ibid.* 85. [19] *Ibid.* 97. [20] *Ibid.* 87.

of thought and he therefore prefers to ignore it, although it was part of my argument (p. 257).

As for the corresponding account provided by the TF, it would appear to reflect information on the Malian origin of the Zās (see below). But more particularly it should be noted that the foundation story of the Songhay kingdom recorded in the TS is placed at Kukiya and does not involve the crossing of the R. Niger.[20] It is only in the TF that the local people are said to have lived under their Zā kings on the right bank before they met the giant Zā al-Ayaman on the left bank of the Niger. Hence it would appear that the figure of al-Ayaman settling to the east of the earlier rulers of Gao can be taken to represent the kings of Gao-Sané (cf. p. 266). However, this analogy should not be overstressed. As will be seen below, the Gao foundation myth has been wrongly transferred to the Zās. It basically belongs to the incoming Songhay of the early fifteenth century.

Turning finally to Hunwick's objection that Wādī Gangeber was too narrow to be an impediment to nomads, it may be observed that not only the width of the watercourse should be considered, nor its annual water-flow, but the vegetation on either side. In this respect the Gangeber may be compared with the equally narrow Komadugu Yobe which served as a protection against nomads for Gazargamo, the capital of Borno. Similarly it is the thick vegetation on the rivers K. Yobe and K. Gana which made it possible for the indigenous Sao to survive for about a century within a few kilometres of Gazargamo in spite of the hostility displayed by the Kanuri.[21] The descriptions provided by D. Denham and H. Barth of the area show how the forest immediately north of the capital remained thick in the nineteenth century.[22] Similar conditions must have prevailed in Gao during periods of wetter climate and lower population density.

In view of these considerations the historian of Songhay would be well advised to place the residence of the pre-Almoravid Qandā rulers of Songhay at the well-known site of Old Gao on the left bank of the Niger. Positive archaeological data in favour of a medieval settlement near to the 'dune rose' or under it would of course lead to a new assessment of the evidence, but it is quite unlikely that such data will be found.[23]

[20] Hunwick's considerations concerning Kukiya (256–7) are based on four assumptions: (1) the Kukiya-traditions refer truly to the beginning of the dynastic history of Gao; (2) Kukiya was identical with Kukiya-Bentia (Desplagnes, Delafosse); (3) the shift of the Zās from Kukiya to Gao was linked to the beginning of regular trans-Saharan trade; (4) regular trans-Saharan trade began in the second half of the eighth century. This is all very uncertain.

[21] Ibn Furṭū, *K. ghazawāt Barnū*, ed. D. Lange (Stuttgart, 1987), 9–21/tr. 43–57; see also map p. 27.

[22] D. Denham *et al.*, *Narrative of Travels and Discoveries*, (2 vols.) (London, 1926) i, 214; H. Barth, *Travels and Discoveries*, (3 vols.) (New York, 1859) iii, 30.

[23] I may add the relevant part of Raymond Mauny's letter of 28 August 1990 that Hunwick wished me to quote: '[...] votre lettre relative à la question du site archéologique de Gao-Sané (Mali) et de sa disposition sur le fleuve Niger ou sur l'une des branches du bas-Tilemsi. C'est auprès de celles-ci qu'il faut placer Gao ancien et Gao Sané, tous deux sur la rive gauche du Niger, Gao ancien au confluent même du Tilemsi. La dune rose, elle, est sur la rive droite du Niger et il n'y a aucune trace de ville médiévale à cet endroit. [...] C'est donc le Tilemsi et non le Niger qui séparent Gao ancien de Gao Sané, jusqu'à preuve du contraire [...]'. Mauny, who had a keen eye for remains of human settlements, could not be misled by historical texts to the point that he would ignore geographical realities.

2. *Old Mali and Gao*

It is generally thought that the history of the great Mali empire begins with the rise of Sundiata towards the middle of the thirteenth century.[24] This view ignores the fact that prior to the rise of Keïta-Mali there flourished an older Mali state which was centered on the Lake area of the Niger.[25] Vast tumuli in this area still testify to the existence of royal burials which are reminiscent of the one described by al-Bakrī with respect to Ghana.[26] They can be dated to the period between the seventh and the twelfth century.[27] The town mentioned by al-Bakrī as the residence of the kings of Ghana was apparently not situated on the R. Niger but in the region between the Niger and the Senegal. However, the Ghana polity lying 400 km to the west of the Niger was most likely either a temporary or a minor seat of royal power.[28] This conclusion is mainly derived from a new look at the Mali-itinerary of al-Bakrī, a literal interpretation of al-Idrīsī and a reappraisal of the Zarma traditions of origin.[29] A major state based on the Lake area of the Niger does not necessarily exclude the existence of a secondary state in the marginal area reached by the traders from the north. The name 'Ghāna' itself, used by Arabic geographers, corresponds only to the stereotyped orthography of a royal title which was either pronounced *gana* or *kana* and which therefore must have been closely related to 'Kanta' and hence to 'Qandā' and a number of other names and terms including 'Akan' and *gandu*.[30] Al-Bakrī called the kingdom centered on the Niger 'Malal' (Mali). From al-Idrīsī we learn that in the twelfth century it was called 'Ghāna'.[31] The relocation of Ghana to the Lake area of the Niger brings the oldest kingdom of West African history into the neighbourhood of Gao.

Against this background my explanations concerning the Qandā/Kanta title and related terms and names should appear more meaningful. Hunwick looks at only the linguistic form. I made it clear however that the Kante caste of the Malinke and the traditional figure Kundu Garassa of the Zarma had more in common than a vague similarity of names: the Kante must once have been associated with royal power in Mali because of their ancestor Suman-

[24] Levtzion, *Ancient Ghana*, 63–80.

[25] D. Lange, 'Das alte Mali und Ghana. Der Beitrag der Oraltraditionen zur Kritik einer historiographischen Fiktion', *Historische Zeitschrift* 235 (1982), 519–23.

[26] Levtzion noted this similarity (*Ancient Ghana*, 26). See now also M. Raimbault and K. Sanogo, *Recherches archéologiques au Mali* (Paris, 1991), 63–80, 174–84, 249–58.

[27] Raimbault and Sanogo, *Recherches*, 320.

[28] *Corpus*, 77–85. It should be noted that in one instance al-Bakrī suggests that Ghana was on the Niger (*Corpus*, 82). Elsewhere he locates it at a distance of three days from the river (*ibid.* 85).

[29] Lange, 'Das alte Mali', 615–16.

[30] M. Delafosse considers that Ghāna is derived from the Malinke term *gana*, *kana*, *kanda* meaning 'chef de guerre' (*La langue Mandingue* [Paris, 1955] ii, 241). In Borgu the name *gando* is given to royal slaves (J. Lombard, *Structures de type féodal* [Paris, 1965], 36–7), while in Hausaland *gandu* designates a large or perhaps more properly a royal farm (A. Mischlich, *Wörterbuch der Haussprache* [Berlin, 1906], 155). The form *kanta* is attested in Songhay as designating foreign slaves, who supposedly were 'royal slaves' (J.-P. Olivier de Sardan, *Concepts et conceptions songhay-zarma* [Paris, 1982], 418).

[31] Lange, 'Das alte Mali', 618. It would be unwise to follow here the *a priori* judgement of Hunwick (p. 261) and others that al-Idrīsī systematically places the major towns of the Sahel on the West African Nile; this opinion is disproven by the location of Gao and Ghana.

guru Kante and the Zarma are descendants of the royal Zās (pp. 269–73).[32] Furthermore, both are related to Old Mali, the Kante through their ancestor Sumanguru Kante and the Zarma through their ancestors Zaberkan and Mali Bero.[33] Considering the similitude of form and meaning between 'Kanta' and 'Kan', I would like to add that Zaberkan, Sambo-Kano, Taguru-Gana and also Kandi, the ancestors of non-blacksmith Zarma,[34] refer by their names to the same widespread institution of kingship as the 'Ghāna' title of Old Mali and the Kanta epithet of Kebbi. However, I now doubt whether the numerous onomastic survivals pointing to the early existence of a dynastic society on the Niger and in Kebbi associated with the name Kanta should be solely related to Old Mali. The ultimate origin of the Kanta kingship is probably located elsewhere.

Following a general usage I referred to the people of the great kingdom centered on the Lake area of the Niger as 'Mande'. In fact, 'Mande' now defines for linguists a group of languages of which Soninke and Malinke, once spoken in one form or another in Ghana and Mali, are historically the most important. Students of Songhay-Zarma society noted that even today the bards (*jesere*) cite their genealogical praises (*zaamu*) in Soninke.[35] They are convinced that key terms of the political and religious vocabulary of Songhay-Zarma are loans from either Malinke or Soninke.[36] It is generally thought that these Mande elements were adopted by the inhabitants of the eastern Niger bend in the course of the Malian domination of the fourteenth century.[37] Hence it is somewhat surprising when Hunwick attributes the introduction of the Mande institution of *jesere dunka* (Royal bard) to Askiya Muḥammad. For this he claims the authority of Olivier de Sardan (p. 259). However, the anthropologist – whose work is indeed of great utility for the historians of Songhay – is careful to quote only the statements of his informants in connection with the *jesere dunka*, whereas elsewhere he makes it clear that he follows the opinion of Jean Rouch in assigning the Mande loans to the earlier period of Malian domination.[38] Olivier de Sardan further informs us that bards called *jesere dunka* are today present in the courts of both Songhay and Zarma princes and that the Zarma princes believe that their forefathers came from Mali together with their bards.[39] Because of the

[32] In correcting 'Nabo Kantabo' to 'Nabo! Kontabo!' Hunwick insinuates that I misquoted Depuis-Yacouba (p. 258 and n. 24), while actually I quoted Jean Rouch (who has the spelling I gave) and mentioned Depuis-Yacouba only as a further reference ('Gao-Sané', 270, n. 113). He further claims (p. 258) that I consider 'Nabo Kantabo' a 'praise-name' while actually I wrote that it is a '*devise*' (motto). He is right however to criticize my translation of Sāmaqandā (p. 258) – it should rather be translated as 'land of Sāma' (Barth has 'Marka-kanda' as 'land of the Soninke' [*Travels*, iii, 702]) – although it does not falsify the opinion that also in this case Qandā stands for Kanta since even the Songhay term *ganda* – 'earth, land', which Hunwick reads into Qandā (pp. 257–8), would appear to be cognate with Kanta (B. Gado, *Le Zarmatarey* [Niamey, 1980], 21–2, see also 134, 145).

[33] For the former see P. Doumbia, 'Étude du clan des forgerons', *Bulletin du Comité d'Etudes Scientifiques et Historiques de l'AOF*, XIX (1936), 334–9 and Lange, 'Das alte Mali', 605–6, and for the latter Y. Urvoy, *Histoire des populations du Soudan Central* (Paris, 1936), 56–9; J. Rouch, *Contribution à l'histoire Songhay* (Dakar, 1953), 207–8; O. de Sardan, *Concepts*, 406–12.

[34] Urvoy, *Histoire*, 56–9; Gado, *Zarmatarey*, 21, 129–34; O. de Sardan, *Concepts*, 410–11. [35] Gado, *Zarmatarey*, 126–8, 145–6; O. de Sardan, *Concepts*, 225–30, 330–1.

[36] O. de Sardan, *Concepts*, 287.

[37] Rouch, *Religion*, 12; O. de Sardan, *Concepts*, 287. [38] *Concepts*, 287. [39] *Ibid.* 227.

strongly rooted Mali tradition of origin the Zarma even consider themselves to be 'Mallince', i.e. Malinké.[40] If further we consider that the *Zā-ber-banda* of the chroniclers and the Zarma (in Hausa: Zabarma) are descendants of the Zās,[41] then it seems preferable to connect the whole question of Mande linguistic and cultural loans in Songhay-Zarma society to the supposition of a Mande ethnic substratum on the Middle Niger.

Here is not the place to debate at length about all aspects of the Mande influences on the Middle Niger. One further point is however of great importance for the question of the ethnic composition of the medieval Gao kingdom. It concerns the Soninke royal title *tunka* which, like other cognate terms mentioned below, is derived from 'Sango' and which therefore would appear to be related in one way or another to the ethnonym 'Songhay'. One might have thought that here we have another loan from Old Mali. However, the royal epithet *tunkara* noted in Kebbi, the ethnonyms Shanga, Tyenga and Wasangari found south of Kebbi and the dynastic gods Tongo and Ṣango of the Achifawa and the Yoruba do not support such a restrictive view. It seems to be more correct to consider that Sango kingdoms existed to the west and to the east of Gao. Therefore the establishment of a Songhay kingdom on the Middle Niger could just as well be the result of early influences from Old Mali as of late influences from Kebbi. Although the Zā and Sunni traditions of origin would seem to suggest that the state builders of the eastern Middle Niger came from the Lake area of the Niger, it would appear that only the eastern traditions of the Sorko dealing with Faran Maka Bote allow us to determine the circumstances of the rise of the Songhay.

According to the evidence provided by the external sources, prior to the coming of the Songhay, the eastern Niger bend was the domain of the Wangara.[42] Hunwick denies this because he believes that the early centre of Wangara activity has to be located on the R. Senegal (p. 263). His opinion is based in particular on the identification of Yaresna, a Wangara town mentioned by al-Bakrī, with a town near Kayes on the R. Senegal.[43] In my opinion Yaresna corresponds to the modern town of Dia in the inner delta of the Niger.[44] In fact, Dia is still considered to be the home town of the Dyula, a present-day group of traders largely identical with the Wangara. But the Wangara were not only traders as Ibn al-Mukhtār claims.[45] From other occurrences of the name it may be deduced that they were also nobles, warriors and peasants.[46] Heinrich Barth defines the Wangara as Eastern Mandingos. He considered them to be identical with the Wa'kore (Soninke) and noted their presence from Kong to Katsina.[47] The phonological similarity between 'Wangara' and 'Wa'kore' suggests that both names are derived from a common term, perhaps composed of wa- ('people of') and

[40] Gado, *Zarmatarey*, 124, 128, 129; O. de Sardan, *Concepts*, 227, 406.

[41] Lange, 'Gao-Sane', 270 n. similarly Gado, *Zarmatarey*, 13, 123–80

[42] 'Gao-Sane', 271–2.

[43] *Corpus*, 82; Hunwick *et al.*, 'Le geographie du Soudan d'après al-Bakrī', *Melanges en hommage a Raymond Mauny* (Paris, 1981), 420; he is right however to read 'Naghmārata' as 'Wangarāta' (*ibid.* 421).

[44] Lange, 'Altes Mali', 615 n. 16. My disagreement with Hunwick is expressed in *ibid.* n. 125. [45] TF, 38/tr. 65.

[46] A. Prost, *La langue soŋay et ses dialectes* (Dakar, 1956), 554; O. de Sardan, *Concepts*, 384–6. In the Kebbi town of Gurma there exists a local community of Wangara peasants. In Borgu the name Wangara refers to Muslim quarters of local towns (Lombard, *Structures*, 36). [47] Barth, *Travels*, i, 479; iii, 111, 202, 645, 646.

guru Kante and the Zarma are descendants of the royal Zās (pp. 269–73).[32] Furthermore, both are related to Old Mali, the Kante through their ancestor Sumanguru Kante and the Zarma through their ancestors Zaberkan and Mali Bero.[33] Considering the similitude of form and meaning between 'Kanta' and 'Kan', I would like to add that Zaberkan, Sambo-Kano, Taguru-Gana and also Kandi, the ancestors of non-blacksmith Zarma,[34] refer by their names to the same widespread institution of kingship as the 'Ghāna' title of Old Mali and the Kanta epithet of Kebbi. However, I now doubt whether the numerous onomastic survivals pointing to the early existence of a dynastic society on the Niger and in Kebbi associated with the name Kanta should be solely related to Old Mali. The ultimate origin of the Kanta kingship is probably located elsewhere.

Following a general usage I referred to the people of the great kingdom centered on the Lake area of the Niger as 'Mande'. In fact, 'Mande' now defines for linguists a group of languages of which Soninke and Malinke, once spoken in one form or another in Ghana and Mali, are historically the most important. Students of Songhay-Zarma society noted that even today the bards (*jesere*) cite their genealogical praises (*zaamu*) in Soninke.[35] They are convinced that key terms of the political and religious vocabulary of Songhay-Zarma are loans from either Malinke or Soninke.[36] It is generally thought that these Mande elements were adopted by the inhabitants of the eastern Niger bend in the course of the Malian domination of the fourteenth century.[37] Hence it is somewhat surprising when Hunwick attributes the introduction of the Mande institution of *jesere dunka* (Royal bard) to Askiya Muḥammad. For this he claims the authority of Olivier de Sardan (p. 259). However, the anthropologist – whose work is indeed of great utility for the historians of Songhay – is careful to quote only the statements of his informants in connection with the *jesere dunka*, whereas elsewhere he makes it clear that he follows the opinion of Jean Rouch in assigning the Mande loans to the earlier period of Malian domination.[38] Olivier de Sardan further informs us that bards called *jesere dunka* are today present in the courts of both Songhay and Zarma princes and that the Zarma princes believe that their forefathers came from Mali together with their bards.[39] Because of the

[32] In correcting 'Nabo Kantabo' to 'Nabo! Kontabo!' Hunwick insinuates that I misquoted Depuis-Yacouba (p. 258 and n. 24), while actually I quoted Jean Rouch (who has the spelling I gave) and mentioned Depuis-Yacouba only as a further reference (' Gao-Sané', 270, n. 113). He further claims (p. 258) that I consider 'Nabo Kantabo' a 'praise-name' while actually I wrote that it is a '*devise*' (motto). He is right however to criticize my translation of Sāmaqandā (p. 258) – it should rather be translated as 'land of Sāma' (Barth has 'Marka-kanda' as 'land of the Soninke' [*Travels*, III, 702]) – although it does not falsify the opinion that also in this case Qandā stands for Kanta since even the Songhay term *ganda* – 'earth, land', which Hunwick reads into Qandā (pp. 257–8), would appear to be cognate with Kanta (B. Gado, *Le Zarmatarey* [Niamey, 1980], 21–2, see also 134, 145).

[33] For the former see P. Doumbia, 'Étude du clan des forgerons', *Bulletin du Comité d'Etudes Scientifiques et Historiques de l'AOF*, XIX (1936), 334–9 and Lange, 'Das alte Mali', 605–6, and for the latter Y. Urvoy, *Histoire des populations du Soudan Central* (Paris, 1936), 56–9; J. Rouch, *Contribution à l'histoire Songhay* (Dakar, 1953), 207–8; O. de Sardan, *Concepts*, 406–12.

[34] Urvoy, *Histoire*, 56–9; Gado, *Zarmatarey*, 21, 129–34; O. de Sardan, *Concepts*, 410–11. [35] Gado, *Zarmatarey*, 126–8, 145–6; O. de Sardan, *Concepts*, 225–30, 330–1.

[36] O. de Sardan, *Concepts*, 287.

[37] Rouch, *Religion*, 12; O. de Sardan, *Concepts*, 287. [38] *Concepts*, 287. [39] *Ibid.* 227.

strongly rooted Mali tradition of origin the Zarma even consider themselves to be 'Mallince', i.e. Malinké.[40] If further we consider that the *Zā-ber-banda* of the chroniclers and the Zarma (in Hausa: Zabarma) are descendants of the Zās,[41] then it seems preferable to connect the whole question of Mande linguistic and cultural loans in Songhay-Zarma society to the supposition of a Mande ethnic substratum on the Middle Niger.

Here is not the place to debate at length about all aspects of the Mande influences on the Middle Niger. One further point is however of great importance for the question of the ethnic composition of the medieval Gao kingdom. It concerns the Soninke royal title *tunka* which, like other cognate terms mentioned below, is derived from 'Sango' and which therefore would appear to be related in one way or another to the ethnonym 'Songhay'. One might have thought that here we have another loan from Old Mali. However, the royal epithet *tunkara* noted in Kebbi, the ethnonyms Shanga, Tyenga and Wasangari found south of Kebbi and the dynastic gods Tongo and Ṣango of the Achifawa and the Yoruba do not support such a restrictive view. It seems to be more correct to consider that Sango kingdoms existed to the west and to the east of Gao. Therefore the establishment of a Songhay kingdom on the Middle Niger could just as well be the result of early influences from Old Mali as of late influences from Kebbi. Although the Zā and Sunni traditions of origin would seem to suggest that the state builders of the eastern Middle Niger came from the Lake area of the Niger, it would appear that only the eastern traditions of the Sorko dealing with Faran Maka Bote allow us to determine the circumstances of the rise of the Songhay.

According to the evidence provided by the external sources, prior to the coming of the Songhay, the eastern Niger bend was the domain of the Wangara.[42] Hunwick denies this because he believes that the early centre of Wangara activity has to be located on the R. Senegal (p. 263). His opinion is based in particular on the identification of Yaresna, a Wangara town mentioned by al-Bakrī, with a town near Kayes on the R. Senegal.[43] In my opinion Yaresna corresponds to the modern town of Dia in the inner delta of the Niger.[44] In fact, Dia is still considered to be the home town of the Dyula, a present-day group of traders largely identical with the Wangara. But the Wangara were not only traders as Ibn al-Mukhtār claims.[45] From other occurrences of the name it may be deduced that they were also nobles, warriors and peasants.[46] Heinrich Barth defines the Wangara as Eastern Mandingos. He considered them to be identical with the Wa'kore (Soninke) and noted their presence from Kong to Katsina.[47] The phonological similarity between 'Wangara' and 'Wa'kore' suggests that both names are derived from a common term, perhaps composed of *wa-* ('people of') and

[40] Gado, *Zarmatarey*, 124, 126, 129; O. de Sardan, *Concepts*, 227, 406.

[41] Lange, 'Gao-Sané', 270–2, similarly Gado, *Zarmatarey*, 13, 123–80.

[42] 'Gao-Sané', 271–2.

[43] *Corpus*, 82; Hunwick *et al.*, 'Le géographie du Soudan d'après al-Bakrī', *Mélanges en hommage à Raymond Mauny* (Paris, 1981), 420; he is right however to read 'Naghmārata' as 'Wangarāta' (*ibid.* 421).

[44] Lange, 'Altes Mali', 615–16. My disagreement with Hunwick is expressed in *ibid.* n. 135. [45] TF, 38–tr. 65.

[46] A. Prost, *La langue soŋay et ses dialectes* (Dakar, 1956), 554; O. de Sardan, *Concepts*, 384–6. In the Kebbi town of Gurma there exists a local community of Wangara peasants. In Borgu the name Wangara refers to Muslim quarters of local towns (Lombard, *Structures*, 36). [47] Barth, *Travels*, I, 479; III, 111, 203, 645, 646.

q/kore (cf. 'king' in Meroitic).[48] Therefore the term could have had the same meaning as 'Songhay', namely 'people of the king', although obviously belonging to a different language. The distribution of the Wangara as indicated by al-Idrīsī and the actual location of surviving Dyula communities – a correlation not considered by Hunwick – makes the kingdom of the Lake area of the Niger, to which Dia must have belonged, the most likely political center of the early Wangara. If it is correct that the main center of Ghana was identical with Old Mali then it is easy to imagine that the subjects of that kingdom – later called 'Soninke' – must have acquired great importance from the West African gold trade and that they were also active in the whole area of the Middle Niger. But as 'people of the king' they were not only traders. Their political influence on the area of the eastern Niger bend must have depended on the strength of Old Mali.

3. *The Sango kingship and Songhay ethnicity*

In this chapter I will try to analyse the name Songhay in more detail. It is well-known that ethnonyms often enshrine valuable information about the formative period of ethnic groups. Contrary to Hunwick, who considers that the name 'Songhay' refers first and foremost to a language (p. 254) and therefore remained for a long time unnoticed, I think that it is derived from a name given to a political entity. The proper analysis of the ethnic situation has in my opinion to give precedence to the contemporary sources over the internal transmission. If the early contemporary sources indicate an extension of the Mande world to the eastern Niger bend on one hand and a localization of the Songhay further to the east on the other, then later evidence suggesting a situation of tribal stability has to be re-evaluated, not the early contemporary evidence.

In Hunwick's opinion ethnicity is something vague and difficult to define. Yet he follows Delafosse and Rouch in believing that the Songhay settled at the eastern Niger bend in predynastic times,[49] while I suggested that the Songhay first arrived in the area in the first half of the fifteenth century. In defence of the established theory of tribal stability he adds an argument based on the folk etymology of the name 'Gao': the author of the TF supposes that the name of the town is derived from the name *gao* given to the fruit of the insignificant *hanam* tree or twiner (*Leptadenia lancifolia* or *L. hastata*).[50] Hunwick thinks that the folk etymology reflects an historical reality and deduces from it that Songhay was spoken in the area since the earliest mention of Gao (pp. 259–60). On the other hand he rejects as non-valid my identifications of several Zā names with Soninke or Malinke words (Māli-Biyaï, Diata-Korē, Kosso-Dārē),[51] he also dismisses my identification of the fourteenth-century Zaghāy with the Songhay and he ignores the Zā/Mande identity of the Zarma.

The first instance of a dynastic name similar to Songhay is provided in the

[48] M. MacAdam, *The Temples of Kawa*, i (London, 1949), 101.

[49] 'Gao revisited', 252–7, Delafosse, *Haut-Sénégal*, i. 239–42; Rouch, *Contribution*, 165–9.

[50] B. Payre de Fabregues, *Lexique des plates du Niger*, (2nd ed., Niamey, 1979), 45.

[51] I do not think that any of the Songhay meanings which Rouch proposes for various Zā names are acceptable. Names like 'le jeune homme jujube' (for Kosso-Dārē) or 'la main sait un peu' (for Biyay-Kayna-Kinba) do not seem to suit rulers of a kingdom (*Contribution*, 174, n. 13).

ninth century by Ibn Khurradadhbih. According to this early account a king called Zāghī/ē b. Zāghī/ē ruled over an area somewhere south of Morocco.[52] In the tenth century the anonymous Persian geography *Hudūd al-'Ālam* mentions a black king with the same name ruling over the West African land of gold.[53] At the beginning of the twelfth century the name 'Zāghē' figuring on the Gao-Sané epitaphs designates the ancestor of the first and the third king of Gao-Sané.[54] In the fourteenth century Ibn Baṭṭūṭa and Ibn Khaldūn mention, in reference to a people or to a country, the name 'Zaghāy' which strangely resembles the earlier ethnonym 'Zaghāwa' applied to a people of the Central Sudan.[55] Finally, at the very end of the fifteenth century we hear from the Gao visitor al-Maghīlī, who repeated what he was told by Askiya Muḥammad that the Sunni kings had to struggle against the 'Saghay' in order to assert their power.[56] It is not clear from the outset in which way these names are related to 'Songhay' and whether they reflect situations which have anything in common. Only 'Saghay' refers undoubtedly to the Songhay since the chroniclers of Timbuktu omitting the *nūn* sometimes use the same spelling when they transcribe this ethnonym. But ironically the first indisputable reference to the Songhay of Gao based on information collected on the spot is particularly obscure because the Sunnis themselves were thought to belong to the Songhay.

In my previous paper I considered only the fourteenth-century Zaghāy. Hunwick agrees with my contention that they did not live on the Middle Niger, but rejects their identification with the Songhay and denies that an entity called by that name can be located in the general area of Kebbi. In his opinion Ibn Baṭṭūṭa's 'Zaghāy' is identical with Katsina in Hausaland and he thinks that Ibn Khaldūn's 'Zaghāy' probably refers to people living in the area of R. Senegal (pp. 254–6). To my mind these identifications appear to be very unsatisfactory on textual and historical grounds. On the basis of an account given by the pilgrim *shaykh* 'Uthmān, Ibn Khaldūn clearly indicates that the Zaghāy were the inhabitants of Takrūr, a country specifically said to be situated to the east of Gao.[57] Since the same eastern Takrūr is also mentioned in another instance, there can be no doubt that we are not dealing here with a kingdom west of Gao but east of it.[58] Ibn Baṭṭūṭa's Zaghāy may likewise be located in the eastern neighbourhood of Gao if we suppose that the traveller, when explaining the export of copper from Takedda, had in mind major kingdoms lying further south: he first mentions the city (*madīna*) of Gobir, although 'Gobir' was presumably the name of a country, then Zaghāy and finally Borno.[59] Conceivably the logic of this enumeration is that the closest comes before the farthest and the west before the east. Hence it is as plausible to locate the country of Zaghāy beyond Gobir to the south-west of Takedda than to look for it in the area between Gobir and Borno, i.e. due south of Takedda. If moreover we consider 'Zaghāy' to be the name of a country, as the names 'Gobir' and 'Borno' encourage us to do, then we would expect to find a name like 'Songhay', which stands for an ethnic group and a country, and not a name like

[52] *Corpus*, 17.

[53] J. M. Cuoq, *Recueil des sources arabes concernant l'Afrique occidentale du VIII^e au XVI^e siècle* (Paris, 1975), 60.

[54] Lange, 'Gao-Sane', 267.

[55] *Corpus*, 302, 333.

[56] *Ajwibat al-Maghīlī 'an 'as'ilat al-Amīn al-hājj Muḥammad Askiyā* (hereafter *Ajwiba*). Arabic text and English translation in Hunwick, *Sharīʿa*, 14–15, 70.

[57] *Ibid.* 322.

[58] *Ibid.* 302.

[59] *Corpus*, 333.

Zai/Katsina referring to a town.[60] More important is the fact that Ibn Baṭṭūṭa and Ibn Khaldūn mention the same name and that they provide information which can be shown to refer to the same general area. The people which both had in view were probably the inhabitants of the Rima state – later called Kabawa after their capital Birnin Kebbi, built in the sixteenth century. Further arguments presented below will support the conclusion that 'Zaghāy' stands for 'Songhay' and it will be shown that the rendering of the voiceless sibilant (*sīn*) by a voiced sibilant (*zā'*) corresponds to an orthographic convention having local roots.

Before dealing in more detail with the meaning of 'Zāghē' we should turn our attention to the strange similarity between 'Zaghāy' and 'Zaghāwa'. Known from the external sources these names are more or less interchangeable: Ibn Khaldūn sometimes writes 'Zaghāy' when he means 'Zaghāwa' and similarly al-Maqrīzī calls the inhabitants of Kanem and Borno 'Zaghāy' although 'Zaghāwa' would appear to be correct.[61] In order to understand this interchangeability one has to take into account the plural marker of the languages spoken on the Middle Niger and in the area of Lake Chad. Indeed, the final syllables *-āy* and *-wa* of the Arabic transcriptions correspond to the Songhay suffix *-ey*[62] and the Kanuri ending *-wa* indicating plurals, while the Hausa suffix *-wa* specifies ethnic designations.[63] Therefore 'Zaghāy' and 'Zaghāwa' may both be considered to convey the meaning of 'the people of Zaghā/ē'. We are left with the meaning of the root 'Zaghā/ē'. The identity of this root with the personal names 'Zāghē b. Zāghē' and 'Zaghē' suggests that these names recorded in various contexts refer to one and the same – presumed – royal ancestor.

Who then was the alleged royal ancestor called 'Zāghē'? This name would seem to correspond to the royal name, title or epithet Zunku which appears in the Gao kinglist in four instances: as Yama Dunku Kība'u, Hizka Zunku-Dam and Zunku Bārū in the twelfth, seventeenth and twenty-ninth position of the Zās and as Bukar Zunku in the seventh position of the Sunnis.[64] Dunku and Zunku can easily be read as Dongo or Sango. Since in three instances the name is written with the same *zā'* as the 'Zāghē' and the 'Zaghāy' of the external sources – and not with a *dāl* or a *sīn* – it can hardly be doubted that 'Zaghāy' transcribes 'Songhay' on account of an early orthographic convention.

In a number of West African societies the name 'Sango' – or its derivatives – is closely associated with kingship: among the Yoruba and the Kotoko of Gawi it refers to an early ruler or a founding hero,[65] in Borno and in Darfur it is a praise-name of the ruler,[66] in Soninke it is a royal title,[67] in Kebbi

[60] It could also be argued that 'Zaghāy' is closer to 'Songhay' than to 'Zai'.

[61] *Corpus*, 320, 321, 354. D. Lange, 'Un texte de Maqrīzī sur les "races des Sūdān"', *Annales Islamologiques*, XV (1979), 207 n. 3.

[62] Prost, *La langue sonay*, 44–50.

[63] J. P. Hutchison, *A Reference Grammar of the Kanuri Language* (Madison, 1981), 43; C. H. Kraft and A. Kirk-Greene, *Hausa* (London, 1973), 124.

[64] TS, 2–3/tr. 4–6; TF (NH), 332–6 (the second name has been amended).

[65] S. Johnson, *History of the Yorubas* (London, 1921), 34, 149–52 (Sango); A. M. Lebeuf, *Principautés kotoko* (Paris, 1969), 71 (Dongo).

[66] J. R. Patterson, *Kanuri Songs* (Lagos, 1926), 1, 17, 27 (Tsongorina); G. Nachtigal, *Sahara und Sudan* (Leipzig, 1889) III, 343 (Donga).

[67] E. Pollet and G. Winter, *La société soninké* (Bruxelles, 1971), 38 (*tuŋka*); *Corpus*, 79 (Tunka).

tunkara is an epithet of the sole remaining titleholder of the erstwhile royal Lailabawa[68] and in Songhay *dunka* has the meaning of 'chief' while *jesere dunka* designates the 'griot' of the king.[69] However, Sango also has a religious meaning for the 'Ṣango' of the Yoruba is not only a royal ancestor but also a god who is known for his powers of lightning and throwing thunderbolts (now represented by stone axes).[70] The same god exists as Dongo in the pre-Islamic pantheon of the Songhay.[71] On account of the similarity of the name and the features associated with the god, anthropologists suggested a loan from the Yoruba to the Songhay.[72]

Further it may be noted that the name 'Sango' has also given rise to a number of ethnonyms given to the following people: the Shanga and the Tyenga of Kebbi, the Wasangari of Borgu, the Sanga of Bauchi, and – of course – the Songhay. In Senegambia the name is applied in the form of 'Sonko' to a widespread royal clan. To this list may be added the onomastic survivals which are more closely related to the 'Zaghāy/Zaghāwa' of the Arabic authors: the name 'Azna/Arna/Anna' applied to the non-Muslim Hausa, the name 'Azza' given to the inferior caste of the Teda-Dazza, and the name 'Azgha' applied by the Tuareg to the Kanuri.[73] Of particular regional interest is the name 'Shonka/Soŋka' by which the Hausa are known to people living in the area of the Benue.[74] On the basis of these comparisons 'Zaghāy' and 'Zaghāwa' may be considered to transcribe the indigenous forms 'Sang-ey' and 'Sanga-wa', both meaning 'the people of Sango'. Hence there is little doubt that 'Zaghāy' stands for 'Songhay', or rather 'Soŋai' or 'Soŋey' as the name is pronounced today, Songhay being a transliteration from Arabic.[75]

The frequent occurrence of 'Sango' and similar designations in West Africa suggests that these names have a common origin and that they are connected with the institution of divine kingship. The Oyo-Yoruba tradition recorded by Samuel Johnson considers Ṣango to be the great-grand-son of Oduduwa, the son of Nimrod, who fled from Mecca.[76] Similarly the tradition of the Achifawa claims that Tongo, the god of the ruling dynasty, came originally from Mecca.[77] These traditions are certainly influenced by Islam. Therefore the investigator should turn his attention to the name 'Sango' itself. It may be of interest that in Mesopotamia the high priests of various cults and in particular the priests of the state god were called *sangu* in Sumerian and *šangû* in Akkadian.[78] The Assyrian kings themselves were considered to be the honorary *šangû* of all the sanctuaries of their country. A number of these kings were known by the *šangû* title, the abstract form of

[68] Lange, 'Gao-Sane', 270.

[69] O. de Sardan, *Concepts*, 122, 225, 230; TF, 11, 94, 155/tr. 14, 177, 276.

[70] Johnson, *History*, 34, 149. L. Frobenius, *Und Afrika sprach* (Berlin, 1912), 206–220.

[71] J. Rouch, *La religion et la magie songhay* (Paris, 1960), 50 n. 1; O. de Sardan, *Concepts*, 360–98.

[72] Rouch, *Religion*, 11; O. de Sardan, *Concepts*, 366.

[73] R. Wente-Lukas, *Handbook of Ethnic Units in Nigeria* (Stuttgart, 1985), 150–6; J. Chapelle, *Nomades noirs du Sahara* (Paris, 1957), 341–4; Gh. Alojaly, *Lexique Touareg-Français* (Copenhague, 1980), 211.

[74] Wente-Lukas, *Handbook*, 150.

[75] I am grateful to Philip Shea for his valuable comments on Hausa history and on the Yoruba Sango.

[76] *History*, 3–4.

[77] Field notes, Kareshin, April 1993. The Achifawa live south-east of Kebbi and east of Yauri.

[78] W. v. Soden, *Akkadisches Handwörterbuch* (3rd ed., Wiesbaden, 1985), 1163.

which, *šangûtu*, was frequently used in reference to the concept of kingship.[78] This etymology seems to cover approximately the same meaning as that which can be established for the West African Sango.

Now, if the term 'Songhay' may be considered to refer to 'the people of Sango', one would expect that the area of the Middle Niger was inhabited by the Songhay since the early medieval period. However, this would be an imprudent extrapolation which ignores the fact that only the suffix *-ey* refers to a specific ethnic group as defined by its language. On the basis of the available onomastic evidence provided by the external sources it would therefore appear that the Songhay were first based in Kebbi. This contention is supported by the internal evidence for the history of the Rima state. The Kebbi chronicle implies that the Songhay were first established in western Kebbi and that from there they moved to Gao because they were expelled by Kanta.[80] Muḥammad Bello specifically notes that the inhabitants of Kebbi descended from a Songhay father and a Katsina mother.[81] The reference to the Katsina mother being due to the rise of a Katsina dynasty in the late fifteenth century, the name Songhay must in turn designate a dynastic reality.[82] Its Hausa form 'Sanwayawa' is mentioned by the Dankanawa, the most senior clan of the Kebbi fisherman (Sarkawa), when asked about their historical identity.[83] Likewise the language in which the magical spells of the fishermen and hunters of Argungu, the present capital of Kebbi, are couched is called 'Sanwayanci' although the Kabawa live in close contact with the Zarma while they know the Songhay only by hear-say.[84] The same name survives in the Mossi and Gurmance designations for the (western/Kebbi) Hausa: 'Zangoro' and 'Jongoy'.[85] Also, it may be observed that Barth called the inhabitants of Kebbi by the name 'Azena' or 'Azna' which seems to be a modified form of 'Zaghāwa', the Hausa equivalent of 'Zaghāy'.[86]

Linguistic indications are particularly significant in the attempt to determine the ethnic identity of the Kabawa before they adopted the Hausa language. The present-day linguistic map of the Central Sudan shows that the Songhay zone of speech extends to the south of Aïr (i.e. to the north-east of Kebbi) where it includes Black African and Tuareg groups. This north-eastern extension suggests that the inhabitants of Kebbi may once have been Songhay-speakers.[87] In the Kebbi kinglist we find among the early names that of Badauji d'*an* Bardau (no. 11)[88] which may belong to the Songhay language because of the suffix *-ize* (here: *ji*) which in Songhay indicates the filial relationship.[89] The Dankanawa of Argungu trace their origin back to

[78] M.-J. Seux, 'Königtum', *Reallexikon der Assyriologie*, VI, 169.
[80] P. G. Harris, *Sokoto Provincial Gazetteer*, typescript (Sokoto, 1938), 234 (the translation of the Kebbi chronicle is here slightly truncated).
[81] E. J. Arnett, *The Rise of the Sokoto Fulani* (Kano, 1922), 13.
[82] D. Lange, 'Das frühe Kebbi und Mali', *Z. der Deut. Morgenl. Gesellsch.*, CXLI (1991), 155–6, 159.
[83] Dan Ayi, Argungu, April 1990.
[84] Local informants, Argungu, Oct. 1989.
[85] Barth, *Travels*, III, 643. The Mossi call the present Songhay 'Marense', sing. 'Marenga' (*ibid.*; O. de Sardan, *Concepts*, 290–1).
[86] Barth, *Travels*, III, 154 and below.
[87] R. Nicolaï, *Les dialectes du songhay* (Paris, 1981), 14, 52. Hunwick refers to the north-eastern Songhay dialects but for reasons not stated denies that this is an indication of an earlier more eastern concentration of Songhay-Zarma ('Gao revisited', 255 n. 10).
[88] Harris, *Sokoto*, 231.
[89] Prost, *Langue*, 242; O. de Sardan, *Concepts*, 222.

Kunku Ben, *ber/beri* being a Songhay word meaning 'great'.[90] Many recognizable Songhay terms are to be found in the Hausa dialect of Kebbi. Among them one may note *dendi* ('downstream' – an expression preserved in the names of one of the gates of Birnin Kebbi), Gurma (the name of a small town on the right bank of the river – in Songhay *gurma* means 'right bank') and *gungu* ('island' – also the name of the first capital of Kebbi).[91] Furthermore it is a fact that the residual language of the fishermen (Sarkawa) and hunters of Kebbi is Songhay.[92]

Finally we have to take into consideration the Hausa expansion to the west set in motion by the imperial designs of 'Alī Gaji (1455–87). Towards 1480 it led to the overthrow of the old Kanta dynasty of Kebbi and the rise of the Hausa dynasty of the Lekawa.[93] This dynastic change ushered in a process of Hausaization and Islamization which transformed the linguistic and cultural configuration of the Kebbi state and turned the originally Songhay society – based on the cult of Sango – into a Hausa society based on Islam.[94] However, many of the Songhay institutions and the language survived in the kingdom of Gao where the Sango cult had already been practised during the period of the Zā dynasty.

4. *The rise of the Sunnis and the westward expansion of the Songhay*

According to both chroniclers the Sunni dynasty was founded by 'Alī Kolon, a liberator who is said to have come from 'Mali'. However, the chroniclers differ with respect to the exact relationship between 'Alī Kolon and the king of Mali. While al-Sa'dī claims that 'Alī Kolon was the son of the Zā ruler Yasiboi (no. 27) who first lived in Mali as a hostage and then liberated his country from foreign domination,[95] the author of the TF (NH) considers that 'Alī Kolon was born in Mali and brought up there as a servant of the Sultan.[96] In fact, it is very uncertain who the alleged founder of the Sunni dynasty was and when he lived. On the other hand it is well-established that in the fourteenth century the Middle Niger was under the sway of Mali. Information provided by Ibn Khaldūn makes it likely that the Keïtas incorporated the kingdom of Gao into their empire at the end of the thirteenth century.[97]

But at what time did the Sunnis come to power and what was their relation to the Keïta dynasty? Earlier historians relied on a synchronism provided by Ibn al-Mukhtār according to which the fifth ruler of the Sunnis, Mākara Komsū, was a contemporary of Mansa Mūsā (c. 1312–37).[98] They therefore supposed that the liberator 'Alī Kolon lived before the period of Malian

[90] Dan Ayi, Argungu, April 1990.
[91] Local informants, Argungu, Birnin Kebbi, Oct. 1989.
[92] The names Sarkawa and Kabawa were earlier synonyms (P. G. Harris, 'Notes on Yauri (Sokoto Province), Nigeria', *J. Roy. Anthrop. Inst. G. Brit. and Ireland*, LX (1930), 291, and own data). [93] Lange, 'Frühes Kebbi', 155–9; 'Hausa-Traditionen', 62–4.
[94] The traveller Heinrich Barth had already considered the possibility that Songhay was the speech of Kebbi before Hausa (*Reisen und Entdeckungen* (Gotha, 1858), IV, 215 [not included in *Travels*, III, 1853]; see also J. Sutton, 'Towards a less orthodox history of Hausaland', *Journal of African History*, XX, 1 (1979), 190–1. Barth heard that in Argungu there was a holy tree called 'tunka' (*Travels*, III, 618). [95] TS, 5–6, 11–9, 12.
[96] TF (NH), 134. [97] Ibn Khaldūn, *Kitāb al-ʿibar*, II, in *Corpus*, 333, 334.
[98] TF (NH), 135.

domination, which does not make much sense.[99] The omission of the name Mākara Komsū from the TS and the precise dating provided by the TF suggest that we are in fact dealing here with a late insertion by a shrewd scholar who was guided by a dated epitaph and a note on the pilgrimage of Mansa Mūsā found in the writings of Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī (*c.* 1444).[100] Indeed, if we suppose that Makāra Komsū was a Malian agent or, perhaps more likely, a dynastic outsider, then we have no difficulty in conceiving the Sunnis of the fourteenth century as subordinates of Mali.

Fortunately the seventeenth-century *Ta'rīkhs* of Timbuktu are not our only sources for the origin of the Sunnis. As already noted, the North African scholar al-Maghīlī recorded some valuable information given to him by Askiya Muḥammad (1493–1527), the founder of the last dynasty of Songhay. In his time it was apparently well known in Gao that Sunni 'Alī belonged to a long line of Muslim rulers who had come to power by conquest. More than thirty Muslim rulers are said to have preceded him. This information from Askiya Muḥammad, whose claim to legitimacy was mainly based on Islam, would appear to be close to the truth since any assertion on his behalf granting his arch-enemy an Islamic ancestry must have weakened his position as a Muslim ruler.[101] Furthermore we learn that successions in Songhay were notoriously violent and that the successive Sunni rulers had to cope with the enigmatic 'Saghay' before they could rule over the kingdom of Songhay.[102] Leo Africanus in turn, at the beginning of the sixteenth century, provides information which does not conform to the general conception that the Sunnis were Songhay rulers since he insists on the Libyan (Berber) origin of Sunni 'Alī by contrasting it with the Black African origin of Askiya Muḥammad.[103] In this respect it may also be observed that the number of thirty rulers said to have preceded Sunni 'Alī compares well – as Hunwick recognized – with the number of rulers given by the kinglist between Kosso-Dārē (the first king of Gao-Sané) and Sunni 'Alī, one having 28 and the other 33 names.[104] Although the data transmitted by al-Maghīlī are not necessarily accurate,[105] it has to be at least admitted that the reference here cannot be to the 'Malian conquest' of about A.D. 1300 since thirty rulers are difficult to squeeze into the period of one hundred and sixty years which separate this event from the time of Sunni 'Alī. Also it is unlikely that Songhay oral traditions would have credited 'Alī Kolon, the alleged founder

[99] Therefore Ch. Monteil thought that Songhay was subdued twice by Mali – at first by Mansa Walī (*c.* 1255–70) and next, some time after the revolt of 'Alī Kolon, by Mansa Sākūra (*c.* 1285–1300) ('Les empires du Mali', *Bull. Com. Ét. Hist. Scient. de l'AOF*, XII [1929], 365–72). He was followed by Rouch, *Contribution*, 175–6, and Levtzion, *Ancient Ghana*, 75–6.

[100] TF (NH), 335; Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī, *al-Durar al-kāmina*, part. transl. in Cuoq, *Recueil*, 394.

[101] In fact, it is often overlooked that the chroniclers depict Sunni 'Alī as a bloodthirsty tyrant – and hence also as a bad Muslim – rather than as an unbeliever (TS, 64–71/tr. 103–16; TF, 43–53/tr. 81–100). [102] Al-Maghīlī, *Ajwiba*, 13–14/tr. 69–70.

[103] See A. Épaulard, *Description de l'Afrique* (Paris, 1956) ii, 462. Marmol calls Sunni 'Alī a Lemtuna (*apud* Delafosse, *Haut-Sénégal*, ii, 61). [104] *Shari'a*, 69 n. 1.

[105] According to al-Maghīlī Sunni 'Alī succeeded his father whereas the kinglist has his father as either his fifth (TF) or his eighth predecessor (TS). In fact, on the basis of the information provided by the *Ta'rīkhs* it would appear to be more likely that Sunni 'Alī was the successor of Sulaymān Dendi.

of the Sunni dynasty, with the liberation of Songhay if in fact the Sunnis were descendants of Mali governors.

More directly significant to the question of the Sunni identity is the reference to the influence which the Saghay/Songhay had on the coming to power of the successive Sunni rulers. If we disregard the seventeenth-century Timbuktu *Ta'rīkhs* and simply follow the evidence of the contemporary sources we would have to think that the Saghay of al-Maghīlī were identical with the Zaghāy living in Kebbi which came earlier to the note of Ibn Baṭṭūta and Ibn Khaldūn. To this supposition it will immediately be objected that the Timbuktu *Ta'rīkhs* do not show any evidence of a displacement of people in the fifteenth century. Yet it is quite surprising that both chroniclers begin their account of Gao history with Sunni 'Alī (1464–92) while they take care to provide as much information as they can on the earlier kingdoms of Ghana and Mali. With respect to Gao, their historical interest sets in all of the sudden with Sunni 'Alī and comes to fruition with the rise of the Askiyas. For the period prior to Sunni 'Alī the chroniclers provide information on the origin of the Zās and the Sunnis and this information is clearly biased. Otherwise they content themselves with reproducing the Gao kinglist. In dealing with 'Alī Kolon, the author of the TF explicitly states that he does not want to get side-tracked in providing further details on the hero's relationship with the king of Mali.[106] Therefore it seems admissible to suppose that prior to Sunni 'Alī, the conditions in Gao did not correspond to the edifying image of Songhay history which the Timbuktu authors wanted to pass down to future generations.[107] They may even have been considerably disrupted by the incoming Songhay.

Support for the assumption of a massive arrival of Songhay warriors in the fifteenth century comes from the oral traditions of the Sorko. The central figure of these traditions is Faran Maka Bote, the ruler of Gao, who is said to have been born in the Dendi locality of Karekopto situated in the so-called 'W' of the R. Niger.[108] Through a common sister, Gawokwot (lit.: 'king of Gao'), the traditions connect him with Si, the personification of all Sunni rulers. The royal status of Faran is further indicated by the name of his wife Innamoy ('queen mother'). The central theme of the Sorko traditions is the fight of Faran with Zinku Baru over the possession of the royal idols (*tooru*). After having vanquished Zinki Baru the hero fights with the great king Si 'who ruled over half of the world' and again is victorious. He is followed by his son Kobe Taka and by his grandson Faran Aka Nabo. Together they are presented as the ruling family of the Songoytye or Songhay.[109] Earlier historians were convinced that the Sorko tradition referred to the predynastic period.[110]

A number of arguments make it preferable to date the coming of Faran Maka Bote and his Sorko boatmen to the beginning of the fifteenth century. First, Faran is presented as the ruler of Gao, not the founder of the town.

[106] TF (NH), 334.

[107] The author of TF (NH), 327–8, makes it clear that his writing was commissioned by Askiya Dāwūd b. Hārūn (1657–69).

[108] I.e. 400 km downstream from Kukiya-Bentia.

[109] Dupuis-Yacouba, 'Legendes de Farang', in J. Desplagnes, *Le Plateau central nigerien* (Paris, 1907), 183–450; Harris, 'Notes on Yauri', 488–9; Rouch, *Contribution*, 165–72. [110] Delafosse, *Haut-Sénégal*, I, 241–4; Rouch, *Contribution*, 165–8.

domination, which does not make much sense.[99] The omission of the name Mākara Komsū from the TS and the precise dating provided by the TF suggest that we are in fact dealing here with a late insertion by a shrewd scholar who was guided by a dated epitaph and a note on the pilgrimage of Mansa Mūsā found in the writings of Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī (c. 1444).[100] Indeed, if we suppose that Makāra Komsū was a Malian agent or, perhaps more likely, a dynastic outsider, then we have no difficulty in conceiving the Sunnis of the fourteenth century as subordinates of Mali.

Fortunately the seventeenth-century *Ta'rīkhs* of Timbuktu are not our only sources for the origin of the Sunnis. As already noted, the North African scholar al-Maghīlī recorded some valuable information given to him by Askiya Muḥammad (1493–1527), the founder of the last dynasty of Songhay. In his time it was apparently well known in Gao that Sunni 'Alī belonged to a long line of Muslim rulers who had come to power by conquest. More than thirty Muslim rulers are said to have preceded him. This information from Askiya Muḥammad, whose claim to legitimacy was mainly based on Islam, would appear to be close to the truth since any assertion on his behalf granting his arch-enemy an Islamic ancestry must have weakened his position as a Muslim ruler.[101] Furthermore we learn that successions in Songhay were notoriously violent and that the successive Sunni rulers had to cope with the enigmatic 'Saghay' before they could rule over the kingdom of Songhay.[102] Leo Africanus in turn, at the beginning of the sixteenth century, provides information which does not conform to the general conception that the Sunnis were Songhay rulers since he insists on the Libyan (Berber) origin of Sunni 'Alī by contrasting it with the Black African origin of Askiya Muḥammad.[103] In this respect it may also be observed that the number of thirty rulers said to have preceded Sunni 'Alī compares well – as Hunwick recognized – with the number of rulers given by the kinglist between Kosso-Dārē (the first king of Gao-Sané) and Sunni 'Alī, one having 28 and the other 33 names.[104] Although the data transmitted by al-Maghīlī are not necessarily accurate,[105] it has to be at least admitted that the reference here cannot be to the 'Malian conquest' of about A.D. 1300 since thirty rulers are difficult to squeeze into the period of one hundred and sixty years which separate this event from the time of Sunni 'Alī. Also it is unlikely that Songhay oral traditions would have credited 'Alī Kolon, the alleged founder

[99] Therefore Ch. Monteil thought that Songhay was subdued twice by Mali: at first by Mansa Walī (*c.* 1255–70) and next, some time after the revolt of 'Alī Kolon, by Mansa Sākūra (*c.* 1285–1300) ('Les empires du Mali', *Bull. Com. Ét. Hist. Scient. de l'AOF*, xii [1929], 365–72). He was followed by Rouch, *Contribution*, 175–6, and Levtzion, *Ancient Ghana*, 75–6.

[100] TF (NH), 335; Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī, *al-Durar al-kāmina*, part. transl. in Cuoq, *Recueil*, 394.

[101] In fact, it is often overlooked that the chroniclers depict Sunni 'Alī as a bloodthirsty tyrant – and hence also as a bad Muslim – rather than as an unbeliever (TS, 64–71/tr. 103–16; TF, 43–53/tr. 81–100).

[102] Al-Maghīlī, *Ajwiba*, 13–14/tr. 69–70.

[103] See A. Épaulard, *Description de l'Afrique* (Paris, 1956) ii, 462. Marmol calls Sunni 'Alī a Lemtuna (*apud* Delafosse, *Haut-Sénégal*, ii, 61).

[104] *Sharī'a*, 69 n. 1.

[105] According to al-Maghīlī Sunni 'Alī succeeded his father whereas the kinglist has his father as either his fifth (TF) or his eighth predecessor (TS). In fact, on the basis of the information provided by the *Ta'rīkhs* it would appear to be more likely that Sunni 'Alī was the successor of Sulaymān Dendi.

of the Sunni dynasty, with the liberation of Songhay if in fact the Sunnis were descendants of Mali governors.

More directly significant to the question of the Sunni identity is the reference to the influence which the Saghay/Songhay had on the coming to power of the successive Sunni rulers. If we disregard the seventeenth-century Timbuktu *Ta'rīkhs* and simply follow the evidence of the contemporary sources we would have to think that the Saghay of al-Maghīlī were identical with the Zaghāy living in Kebbi which came earlier to the note of Ibn Baṭṭūta and Ibn Khaldūn. To this supposition it will immediately be objected that the Timbuktu *Ta'rīkhs* do not show any evidence of a displacement of people in the fifteenth century. Yet it is quite surprising that both chroniclers begin their account of Gao history with Sunni 'Alī (1464–92) while they take care to provide as much information as they can on the earlier kingdoms of Ghana and Mali. With respect to Gao, their historical interest sets in all of the sudden with Sunni 'Alī and comes to fruition with the rise of the Askiyas. For the period prior to Sunni 'Alī the chroniclers provide information on the origin of the Zās and the Sunnis and this information is clearly biased. Otherwise they content themselves with reproducing the Gao kinglist. In dealing with 'Alī Kolon, the author of the TF explicitly states that he does not want to get side-tracked in providing further details on the hero's relationship with the king of Mali.[106] Therefore it seems admissible to suppose that prior to Sunni 'Alī, the conditions in Gao did not correspond to the edifying image of Songhay history which the Timbuktu authors wanted to pass down to future generations.[107] They may even have been considerably disrupted by the incoming Songhay.

Support for the assumption of a massive arrival of Songhay warriors in the fifteenth century comes from the oral traditions of the Sorko. The central figure of these traditions is Faran Maka Bote, the ruler of Gao, who is said to have been born in the Dendi locality of Karekopto situated in the so-called 'W' of the R. Niger.[108] Through a common sister, Gawokwoi (lit.: 'king of Gao'), the traditions connect him with Si, the personification of all Sunni rulers. The royal status of Faran is further indicated by the name of his wife Innamoy ('queen mother'). The central theme of the Sorko traditions is the fight of Faran with Zinku Baru over the possession of the royal idols (*tooru*). After having vanquished Zinki Baru the hero fights with the great king Si 'who ruled over half of the world' and again is victorious. He is followed by his son Kobe Taka and by his grandson Faran Aka Nabo. Together they are presented as the ruling family of the Songoytye or Songhay.[109] Earlier historians were convinced that the Sorko tradition referred to the predynastic period.[110]

A number of arguments make it preferable to date the coming of Faran Maka Bote and his Sorko boatmen to the beginning of the fifteenth century. First, Faran is presented as the ruler of Gao, not the founder of the town.

[106] TF (NH), 334.

[107] The author of TF (NH), 327–8, makes it clear that his writing was commissioned by Askiya Dāwūd b. Hārūn (1657–69).

[108] I.e. 400 km downstream from Kukiya-Bentia.

[109] Dupuis-Yacouba, 'Légendes de Farang', in L. Desplagnes, *Le plateau central nigerien* (Paris, 1907), 183–450; Harris, 'Notes on Yauri', 288–9; Rouch, *Contribution*, 165–72.

[110] Delafosse, *Haut-Sénégal*, i, 241–4; Rouch, *Contribution*, 165–8.

domination, which does not make much sense.[98] The omission of the name Mākara Komsū from the TS and the precise dating provided by the TF suggest that we are in fact dealing here with a late insertion by a shrewd scholar who was guided by a dated epitaph and a note on the pilgrimage of Mansa Mūsā found in the writings of Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī (*c.* 1444).[100] Indeed, if we suppose that Makāra Komsū was a Malian agent or, perhaps more likely, a dynastic outsider, then we have no difficulty in conceiving the Sunnis of the fourteenth century as subordinates of Mali.

Fortunately the seventeenth-century *Ta'rīkhs* of Timbuktu are not our only sources for the origin of the Sunnis. As already noted, the North African scholar al-Maghīlī recorded some valuable information given to him by Askiya Muḥammad (1493–1527), the founder of the last dynasty of Songhay. In his time it was apparently well known in Gao that Sunni 'Alī belonged to a long line of Muslim rulers who had come to power by conquest. More than thirty Muslim rulers are said to have preceded him. This information from Askiya Muḥammad, whose claim to legitimacy was mainly based on Islam, would appear to be close to the truth since any assertion on his behalf granting his arch-enemy an Islamic ancestry must have weakened his position as a Muslim ruler.[101] Furthermore we learn that successions in Songhay were notoriously violent and that the successive Sunni rulers had to cope with the enigmatic 'Saghay' before they could rule over the kingdom of Songhay.[102] Leo Africanus in turn, at the beginning of the sixteenth century, provides information which does not conform to the general conception that the Sunnis were Songhay rulers since he insists on the Libyan (Berber) origin of Sunni 'Alī by contrasting it with the Black African origin of Askiya Muḥammad.[103] In this respect it may also be observed that the number of thirty rulers said to have preceded Sunni 'Alī compares well – as Hunwick recognized – with the number of rulers given by the kinglist between Kosso-Dārē (the first king of Gao-Sané) and Sunni 'Alī, one having 28 and the other 33 names.[104] Although the data transmitted by al-Maghīlī are not necessarily accurate,[105] it has to be at least admitted that the reference here cannot be to the 'Malian conquest' of about A.D. 1300 since thirty rulers are difficult to squeeze into the period of one hundred and sixty years which separate this event from the time of Sunni 'Alī. Also it is unlikely that Songhay oral traditions would have credited 'Alī Kolon, the alleged founder

[98] Therefore Ch. Monteil thought that Songhay was subdued twice by Mali: at first by Mansa Walī (*c.* 1255–70) and next, some time after the revolt of 'Alī Kolon, by Mansa Sākūra (*c.* 1285–1300) ('Les empires du Mali', *Bull. Com. Ét. Hist. Scient. de l'AOF*, xii [1929], 365–72). He was followed by Rouch, *Contribution*, 175–6, and Levtzion, *Ancient Ghana*, 75–6.

[100] TF (NH), 335; Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī, *al-Durar al-kāmina*, part. transl. in Cuoq, *Recueil*, 394.

[101] In fact, it is often overlooked that the chroniclers depict Sunni 'Alī as a bloodthirsty tyrant – and hence also as a bad Muslim – rather than as an unbeliever (TS, 64–71/tr. 103–16; TF, 43–53/tr. 81–100).

[102] Al-Maghīlī, *Ajwiba*, 13–14/tr. 69–70.

[103] See A. Épaulard, *Description de l'Afrique* (Paris, 1956) ii, 462. Marmol calls Sunni 'Alī a Lemtuna (*apud* Delafosse, *Haut-Sénégal*, ii, 61).

[104] *Sharī'a*, 69 n. 1.

[105] According to al-Maghīlī Sunni 'Alī succeeded his father whereas the kinglist has his father as either his fifth (TF) or his eighth predecessor (TS). In fact, on the basis of the information provided by the *Ta'rīkhs* it would appear to be more likely that Sunni 'Alī was the successor of Sulaymān Dendi.

of the Sunni dynasty, with the liberation of Songhay if in fact the Sunnis were descendants of Mali governors.

More directly significant to the question of the Sunni identity is the reference to the influence which the Saghay/Songhay had on the coming to power of the successive Sunni rulers. If we disregard the seventeenth-century Timbuktu *Ta'rīkhs* and simply follow the evidence of the contemporary sources we would have to think that the Saghay of al-Maghīlī were identical with the Zaghāy living in Kebbi which came earlier to the note of Ibn Baṭṭūta and Ibn Khaldūn. To this supposition it will immediately be objected that the Timbuktu *Ta'rīkhs* do not show any evidence of a displacement of people in the fifteenth century. Yet it is quite surprising that both chroniclers begin their account of Gao history with Sunni 'Alī (1464–92) while they take care to provide as much information as they can on the earlier kingdoms of Ghana and Mali. With respect to Gao, their historical interest sets in all of the sudden with Sunni 'Alī and comes to fruition with the rise of the Askiyas. For the period prior to Sunni 'Alī the chroniclers provide information on the origin of the Zās and the Sunnis and this information is clearly biased. Otherwise they content themselves with reproducing the Gao kinglist. In dealing with 'Alī Kolon, the author of the TF explicitly states that he does not want to get side-tracked in providing further details on the hero's relationship with the king of Mali.[106] Therefore it seems admissible to suppose that prior to Sunni 'Alī, the conditions in Gao did not correspond to the edifying image of Songhay history which the Timbuktu authors wanted to pass down to future generations.[107] They may even have been considerably disrupted by the incoming Songhay.

Support for the assumption of a massive arrival of Songhay warriors in the fifteenth century comes from the oral traditions of the Sorko. The central figure of these traditions is Faran Maka Bote, the ruler of Gao, who is said to have been born in the Dendi locality of Karekopto situated in the so-called 'W' of the R. Niger.[108] Through a common sister, Gawokwoi (lit.: 'king of Gao'), the traditions connect him with Si, the personification of all Sunni rulers. The royal status of Faran is further indicated by the name of his wife Innamoy ('queen mother'). The central theme of the Sorko traditions is the fight of Faran with Zinku Baru over the possession of the royal idols (*tooru*). After having vanquished Zinki Baru the hero fights with the great king Si 'who ruled over half of the world' and again is victorious. He is followed by his son Kobe Taka and by his grandson Faran Aka Nabo. Together they are presented as the ruling family of the Songoytye or Songhay.[109] Earlier historians were convinced that the Sorko tradition referred to the predynastic period.[110]

A number of arguments make it preferable to date the coming of Faran Maka Bote and his Sorko boatmen to the beginning of the fifteenth century. First, Faran is presented as the ruler of Gao, not the founder of the town.

[106] TF (NH), 334.

[107] The author of TF (NH), 327–8, makes it clear that his writing was commissioned by Askiya Dāwūd b. Hārūn (1657–69).

[108] I.e. 400 km downstream from Kukiya-Bentia.

[109] Dupuis-Yacouba, 'Légendes de Farang', in L. Desplagnes, *Le plateau central nigerien* (Paris, 1907), 383–450; Harris, 'Notes on Yauri', 288–9; Rouch, *Contribution*, 165–72.

[110] Delafosse, *Haut-Sénégal*, i, 241–4; Rouch, *Contribution*, 165–8.

domination, which does not make much sense.[99] The omission of the name Mākara Komsū from the TS and the precise dating provided by the TF suggest that we are in fact dealing here with a late insertion by a shrewd scholar who was guided by a dated epitaph and a note on the pilgrimage of Mansa Mūsā found in the writings of Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī (*c.* 1444).[100] Indeed, if we suppose that Makāra Komsū was a Malian agent or, perhaps more likely, a dynastic outsider, then we have no difficulty in conceiving the Sunnis of the fourteenth century as subordinates of Mali.

Fortunately the seventeenth-century *Ta'rīkhs* of Timbuktu are not our only sources for the origin of the Sunnis. As already noted, the North African scholar al-Maghīlī recorded some valuable information given to him by Askiya Muḥammad (1493–1527), the founder of the last dynasty of Songhay. In his time it was apparently well known in Gao that Sunni 'Alī belonged to a long line of Muslim rulers who had come to power by conquest. More than thirty Muslim rulers are said to have preceded him. This information from Askiya Muḥammad, whose claim to legitimacy was mainly based on Islam, would appear to be close to the truth since any assertion on his behalf granting his arch-enemy an Islamic ancestry must have weakened his position as a Muslim ruler.[101] Furthermore we learn that successions in Songhay were notoriously violent and that the successive Sunni rulers had to cope with the enigmatic 'Saghay' before they could rule over the kingdom of Songhay.[102] Leo Africanus in turn, at the beginning of the sixteenth century, provides information which does not conform to the general conception that the Sunnis were Songhay rulers since he insists on the Libyan (Berber) origin of Sunni 'Alī by contrasting it with the Black African origin of Askiya Muḥammad.[103] In this respect it may also be observed that the number of thirty rulers said to have preceded Sunni 'Alī compares well – as Hunwick recognized – with the number of rulers given by the kinglist between Kosso-Dārē (the first king of Gao-Sané) and Sunni 'Alī, one having 28 and the other 33 names.[104] Although the data transmitted by al-Maghīlī are not necessarily accurate,[105] it has to be at least admitted that the reference here cannot be to the 'Malian conquest' of about A.D. 1300 since thirty rulers are difficult to squeeze into the period of one hundred and sixty years which separate this event from the time of Sunni 'Alī. Also it is unlikely that Songhay oral traditions would have credited 'Alī Kolon, the alleged founder

[99] Therefore Ch. Monteil thought that Songhay was subdued twice by Mali: at first by Mansa Wali (*c.* 1255–70) and next, some time after the revolt of 'Alī Kolon, by Mansa Sākūra (*c.* 1285–1300) ('Les empires du Mali', *Bull. Com. Ét. Hist. Scient. de l'AOF*, XII [1929], 365–72). He was followed by Rouch, *Contribution*, 175–6, and Levtzion, *Ancient Ghana*, 75–6.

[100] *TF (NH)*, 335; Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī, *al-Durar al-kāmina*, part. transl. in Cuoq, *Recueil*, 394.

[101] In fact, it is often overlooked that the chroniclers depict Sunni 'Alī as a bloodthirsty tyrant – and hence also as a bad Muslim – rather than as an unbeliever (*TS*, 64–71/tr. 103–16; *TF*, 43–53/tr. 81–100). [102] Al-Maghīlī, *Ajwiba*, 13–14/tr. 69–70.

[103] See A. Épaulard, *Description de l'Afrique* (Paris, 1956) II, 462. Marmol calls Sunni 'Alī a Lemtuna (*apud* Delafosse, *Haut-Sénégal*, II, 61). [104] *Sharī'a*, 69 n. 1.

[105] According to al-Maghīlī Sunni 'Alī succeeded his father whereas the kinglist has his father as either his fifth (*TF*) or his eighth predecessor (*TS*). In fact, on the basis of the information provided by the *Ta'rikhs* it would appear to be more likely that Sunni 'Alī was the successor of Sulaymān Dendi.

of the Sunni dynasty, with the liberation of Songhay if in fact the Sunnis were descendants of Mali governors.

More directly significant to the question of the Sunni identity is the reference to the influence which the Saghay/Songhay had on the coming to power of the successive Sunni rulers. If we disregard the seventeenth-century Timbuktu *Ta'rīkhs* and simply follow the evidence of the contemporary sources we would have to think that the Saghay of al-Maghīlī were identical with the Zaghāy living in Kebbi which came earlier to the note of Ibn Baṭṭūta and Ibn Khaldūn. To this supposition it will immediately be objected that the Timbuktu *Ta'rīkhs* do not show any evidence of a displacement of people in the fifteenth century. Yet it is quite surprising that both chroniclers begin their account of Gao history with Sunni 'Alī (1464–92) while they take care to provide as much information as they can on the earlier kingdoms of Ghana and Mali. With respect to Gao, their historical interest sets in all of the sudden with Sunni 'Alī and comes to fruition with the rise of the Askiyas. For the period prior to Sunni 'Alī the chroniclers provide information on the origin of the Zās and the Sunnis and this information is clearly biased. Otherwise they content themselves with reproducing the Gao kinglist. In dealing with 'Alī Kolon, the author of the TF explicitly states that he does not want to get side-tracked in providing further details on the hero's relationship with the king of Mali.[106] Therefore it seems admissible to suppose that prior to Sunni 'Alī, the conditions in Gao did not correspond to the edifying image of Songhay history which the Timbuktu authors wanted to pass down to future generations.[107] They may even have been considerably disrupted by the incoming Songhay.

Support for the assumption of a massive arrival of Songhay warriors in the fifteenth century comes from the oral traditions of the Sorko. The central figure of these traditions is Faran Maka Bote, the ruler of Gao, who is said to have been born in the Dendi locality of Karékopto situated in the so-called 'W' of the R. Niger.[108] Through a common sister, Gawokwoi (lit.: 'king of Gao'), the traditions connect him with Si, the personification of all Sunni rulers. The royal status of Faran is further indicated by the name of his wife Innamoy ('queen mother'). The central theme of the Sorko traditions is the fight of Faran with Zinku Baru over the possession of the royal idols (*fooru*). After having vanquished Zinki Baru the hero fights with the great king Si 'who ruled over half of the world' and again is victorious. He is followed by his son Kobe Taka and by his grandson Faran Aka Nabo. Together they are presented as the ruling family of the Songoyye or Songhay.[109] Earlier historians were convinced that the Sorko tradition referred to the predynastic period.[110]

A number of arguments make it preferable to date the coming of Faran Maka Bote and his Sorko boatmen to the beginning of the fifteenth century. First, Faran is presented as the ruler of Gao, not the founder of the town.

[106] *TF (NH)*, 334.

[107] The author of *TF (NH)*, 327–8, makes it clear that his writing was commissioned by Askiya Dāwūd b. Hārūn (1657–69).

[108] I.e. 400 km downstream from Kukiya-Bentia.

[109] Dupuis-Yacouba, 'Legendes de Farang', in J. Desplagnes, *Le plateau central nigerien* (Paris, 1907), 183–450; Harris, 'Notes on Yauri', 288–9; Rouch, *Contribution*, 165–74. [110] Delafosse, *Haut-Sénégal*, I, 241–4; Rouch, *Contribution*, 165–8.

Second, the royal status of Faran and his family would not be explicable if he had belonged to the predynastic period. Third, Zinki Baru was the first master of the royal idols, not Faran. Fourth, Zinki Baru may be identified with Zunku Bāru (no. 29), the last king but two of the Zās.[111] Fifth, Kobe Taka the son of Faran Maka Bote is possibly identical with the first historical ruler of the Sunnis, Ibrāhīm Kubē (no. 3), 'Alī Kolon and Silman Nāri being probably fictive figures. Alternatively Faran himself could be identical with Muḥammad Fār (no. 12).[112] Furthermore it should be taken into account that the Sorko are today ritualists dealing with the erstwhile royal cult of Dongo/Sango.[113] Although the heavily Islamized Sarkawa of Kebbi do not seem to have preserved the Dongo cult, the Dankanawa who are their leading clan claim to descend from Magajin Dankanawa and trace their origin to Mecca.[114] The name Danka-n-awa itself seems to suggest an earlier deep involvement of the Sarkawa with the Dongo cult. Turning to the name of Faran Maka Bote we note that the proper name Faran or Fara corresponds to the title *farba* (also: *farma*, *fārī*) which is the most common title held by provincial governors in Mali and Songhay.[115] Among the Hausa-speaking Sarkawa one of the most pre-eminent titles is Issa *farma* ('governor of the R. Niger').[116] The motto of Faran Maka Bote is *Nabo Kantabo*. In the light of the other elements pointing to a Kebbi origin of the Sorko, this may be interpreted as 'the governor of Kanta'.[117] Hence there are a number of reasons to discount the idea advanced by Delafosse, to which Hunwick subscribes, that Faran Maka Bote was the leader of independent predynastic fishermen moving up the river Niger in quest of new fishing grounds. Probably he was a military commander acting on behalf of the Kantas of Kebbi.

Contemporary European sources provide some information which may be interpreted as indicating a westward expansion of Kebbi in the first half of the fifteenth century. Towards 1456, the Portuguese captain Diogo Gomes heard on the R. Gambia that the great king of Inner West Africa lived in a city surrounded by a wall of baked tiles called Quioquia.[118] Given its name and its stone walls, Quioquia would seem to correspond to either Gungu or Surame, the two successive medieval capitals of Kebbi.[119] In 1447 the Italian trader Malfante was told in Tuat that the region of the Middle Niger had

[111] O. de Sardan, *Concepts*, 365.

[112] This would mean that the Gao list includes not only Zā and Sunni kings but also rulers who do not belong to the two old royal clans of Gao. As noted above this seems also to be the case with Mākara Komsū. It would also mean that the 28 or 33 Sunni rulers have to be squeezed into the period extending from *c.* 1400 to 1464, or else Ibrāhīm Kubē was purposely placed behind 'Alī Kolon and Silman Nāri.

[113] J. Boulnois and B. Hama, *Empire de Gao, histoire, coutumes et magie* (Paris, 1954), 104; Rouch, *Religion*, 11.

[114] P. G. Harris has the Sarkawa come from Songhay ('The Kebbi fishermen (Sokoto province, Nigeria)', *J. Roy. Anthrop. Inst. G. Brit. and Ireland*, LXXII (1942), 23), but this is not the tradition of the Dankanawa themselves (Dan Ayi and others, Argungu, April 1990).

[115] For Mali cf. Ibn Baṭṭūṭa in *Corpus*, 284, 290; for Songhay: Bāghana-farma, Hinga-farma, Dendi-fārī, Kabara-farma etc.

[116] Harris, 'Notes on Yauri', 289.

[117] Perhaps from Arabic *nā'ib* – 'substitute'. The Egyptian *nb* – 'master' should also be considered.

[118] In G. R. Crone, *The Voyages of Cadamosto* (London, 1937), 93–5.

[119] Lange, 'Frühes Kebbi', 142–8.

been invaded by a huge pagan army from the south.[120] It was thought that these invaders were the Mossi,[121] but in the light of the preceding discussion it is more likely that the reference is here to the people of Kebbi. On the other hand we know from the TF that the residence of the Sunnis prior to Sunni 'Alī was in the town of Kukiya, i.e. Kukiya-Bentia the site of which lies 140 km downstream from Gao.[122] The same source tells us that early in his reign Sunni 'Alī went to the Borgu town of Lolo in order to levy troops.[123] These eastern connections of the last Sunnis make good sense if they are considered in relation to the supposition of an earlier dependency of the Sunnis on the military support of Kebbi.

Turning our attention now to the Gao kinglist and to the question of Sunni origins we notice that neither version of this short but precious document provides any evidence for a foreign interference other than the Malian domination of the fourteenth century. However the change of the royal title itself constitutes valuable evidence if it is considered in connection with the dynastic situation prevailing in medieval Gao. The Sunnis who are supposed to have ruled after the Zās must have come to power after the dislocation of the Mali empire. Were they opponents of Mali as al-Sa'dī claims? Most likely they were, in one way or another. But they cannot possibly have been descendants of the Zās who fought against foreign oppressors because they would certainly have prided themselves on their patriotic deeds by adopting the title of their illustrious forefathers. Therefore the relations between the Sunnis and the Zās have to be otherwise conceived. Were the Sunnis brought up at the court of Mali as the TF has it? Possibly, but we must exclude the idea that they were Malian governors, otherwise the TS would certainly not have depicted 'Alī Kolon as a Songhay patriot who liberated his country and the TF would not have insisted on his antagonistic relations with the king of Mali. The widely differing versions of the *Ta'rikhs* can be reconciled if we take into account the information provided by al-Maghīlī and Leo Africanus according to which the Sunnis were early Muslim conquerors of Berber origin. The *sunni* title itself could indicate an early deep commitment of the Sunnis towards Islam considering that it seems to be derived from the Arabic *sunnī* – 'a follower of the *sunna* (of the Prophet)' and that in consequence it should be interpreted as an appropriate sobriquet for followers of the Almoravid orthodoxy.[124] Taken together, these indications strongly suggest that the Sunnis rose to power in Gao at the time of the Almoravids and that they are identical with the Zāghē.[125] They must therefore have existed for more than three hundred years side by side with the royal clan of the Zās.

Now to the Zās. Members of this age-old royal clan must have been in a

[120] *In* Ch. de La Ronciere, *La decouverte de l'Afrique* (Cairo, 1924) I, 156.

[121] Y. Person, 'Le Moyen Niger au XV^e^ siècle d'après des documents européens', *Notes Africaines*, LXXVII (1958), 46.

[122] TF, 45/tr. 85. Kukiya corresponds to Songhay '*gungu*' – island.

[123] *Ta'rīkh al-Fattāsh*, 46/tr. 89.

[124] Perhaps the etymology provided by the TF according to which the title *sīrī* (= *soni/sunni*) meant 'vicar' (43/tr. 81) corresponds to an African interpretation of the Arabic *sunni*. Indeed, the *soni* title having the meaning of the TF can be found in various kingdoms between the Nile and the Niger.

[125] The rather neutral and non-prestigious title of *malik* of the Gao-Sane epitaphs which attracted the attention of Hunwick (p. 18) was probably meant to indicate the inferior status of the Zāghē in relation to the distant, but highly respected Almoravids.

position of real power in Gao during the period of Malian overlordship, otherwise the subsequent rise of the Sunnis would not make sense. A look at the kinglist reproduced in TF and TS shows that after Zā Yasiboï, the supposed father of the 'liberator' 'Alī Kolon, the names of three (TF) and four (TS) rulers are mentioned. It would appear that these Zā rulers belong to the Mali period. Among them is Zunku (Songo) Bāru (no. 29), probably the opponent of the Sorko governor Faran Maka Bote. Having been largely dispossessed of their former power by the Almoravid Sunnis, the Zās would appear to have taken advantage of the new strength of Mali under the Keïta dynasty. Whether they actually called in the Keïtas in a desperate attempt to rid themselves of the Sunnis or whether the Keïtas used them as local allies after having seized Gao is difficult to say. Whatever the case, the effect of the Malian expansion on the dynastic situation in Gao is clear: from now on the situation was reversed and the Sunnis were reduced to the status of shadow-kings. They may even have been transferred to the royal court of the Keïtas – as is implied by the *Ta'rīkhs* – but it is also possible that the oral traditions refer to Mali only metaphorically on account of the Malian origin of the Zās. In that case the Zās would have placed the senior representative of the Sunnis under their tight surveillance in Gao itself. Whatever the correct interpretation, it is clear that the final shaping of the Gao kinglist by presenting the Zās as predecessors of the Sunnis does avoid any allusion to plots staged by either dynasty in connivance with foreign powers. This streamlined version of Gao history should therefore be seen as the product of court historians who, working under the late Askiyas, attempted to overcome the individual clan interests by creating a national consensus between the main components of the Songhay society based on an acceptable common history.

The interpretation of the dynastic history of Gao in terms of a power-struggle between two royal clans is supported by another argument. Earlier historians found it difficult to accept the information provided by Ibn Khaldūn according to which Mali extended its imperial frontiers beyond Gao to Takedda at the foot of the Aïr mountains.[126] In fact, an alliance between the Keïtas and the Zās would have provided an excellent basis for a far-flung eastern expansion of fourteenth-century Mali. The Sunnis stood in opposition to the alliance of Malian forces and apparently also the Kantas of Kebbi (whose alleged subdual by Mali may have corresponded to a temporary vassalage).[127] In view of this constellation it is not difficult to assume that the Sunnis of the late Mali period tried to reconquer the pre-eminent position of their forefathers with the help of Kebbi, the powerful Muslim state to the east of Gao. The alleged flight of 'Alī Kolon from Mali to Songhay may therefore be tentatively interpreted as a move from Gao to Gungu with the hope of obtaining the support of the Kantas for the cause of the Sunnis. An early fifteenth-century military intervention of Kebbi into the affairs of Gao can be easily reconciled with the internal written evidence for the history of Songhay. In fact, an invasion of Gao by its eastern neighbour, bringing with it a major ethnic disruption, would seem to be the

[126] *K. al-'ibar*, see *Corpus*, 336, 338–9. Levtzion following H. Lhote interprets Ibn Khaldūn's reference to Takedda as a mistake for Tadmekka (*Ancient Ghana*, 77–8).
[127] *Corpus*, 322.

best explanation for the strange unwillingness of both chroniclers to deal seriously with any aspect of the pre-Sunni 'Alī history of Gao.

The preceding historical reconstruction builds on the concept of a dual kingship. It supposes that the rise of the Sunnis in the Almoravid period did not lead to the elimination but to the subordination of the Zās. It further stipulates that the Zās rose once more to power with the help of the Keïtas in the fourteenth century and it assumes that the Zās were definitively defeated by a Kebbi invasion force sent in support of the Sunnis at the beginning of the fifteenth century.[128] The subsequent conflicts between the Sorko governors of Kebbi and the Sunni pretenders to the throne of Gao would appear to have brought about further disturbances. As *Zā-ber-banda* the Zās appear once more in the historical record during the reign of Askiya Muhammad when they are said to have been made 'cannon fodder' in a battle in Borgu which took place in 1505.[129] This gives rise to the supposition that during the early years of Askiya Muhammad's reign members of the ancient royal clan played an important role. They would even appear to have been instrumental in the successful overthrow of the Sunnis. At the end of the pre-colonial period the Zās survived as petty rulers of the independent Zarma principalities, while the descendants of the Sunnis, the Sohance, were subject to the Askiya princelets.

CONCLUSION

The medieval period of Gao history is known in the first place through the evidence provided by Arabic geographers and other Muslim authors of the north. In order to assess the historical value of this evidence it must be remembered that these scholars were dependent on information obtained from traders and travellers who reached only the desert-edge centres of the trans-Saharan trade, places/locations like Kumbi Saleh and Gao. In fact, these market towns were hardly more than outposts and windows of the powerful kingdoms of Inner West Africa on the Mediterranean world. Based in regions with greater agricultural potential, Old Mali and Kebbi could mobilize more people over a longer period of time. As for the kingdom of Gao, it was mainly restricted to the narrow riverine area of the eastern Niger bend and could therefore dispose of only limited resources. Being situated in reach of Old Mali and Kebbi, it must be expected that Gao was subject to influences from these powerful kingdoms.

The site of Kukiya-Bentia had only modest advantages in comparison with the major market towns of the trans-Saharan trade and the great kingdoms of the interior parts of West Africa.[130] It is difficult to imagine that the Timbuktu chroniclers could have considered this locality as the cradle of the Songhay nation and there is no reason why al-Sa'dī should have believed that Kukiya-Bentia existed as early as the time of the Pharaohs.[131] Better arguments suggest that the early Kukiya of the *Ta'rīkhs* corresponds to the

[128] It may be noted that the Abbasid caliphs after having lost their worldly power in 945 survived for even a longer period in the shadow of powerful secular rulers and that their history was also punctuated by occasional reversals of fortune until finally they were deposed in 1517 (B. Lewis, 'Abbāsides', *Encyclopédie de l'Islam* [new edition], 1, 20–2).
[129] TS, 76/11–12b. Hunwick, 'Gao revisited', 273.
[130] Hunwick, 'Gao revisited', 256–7.
[131] TS 4/12b.

Quioquia/Chuchiam of the European authors of the mid-fifteenth century.[132] As such it actually designates Gungu, the pre-Lekawa capital of the state improperly called Kebbi.[133] Perhaps the first state of the Songhay known to history should be called Old Songhay.

Hitherto historians have taken the internal evidence of Gao history at face value and they have neglected the evidence derived from the external sources. Even Hunwick, who relies on the analysis of written texts in the case of the *Ta'rīkhs*, does not appreciate the fragility of the traditions of origin included, while in actual fact the analysis of these traditions needs particular critical acumen. The foregoing discussion indicates that the Timbuktu chroniclers, as well as the court historians of the Askiyas, were interested in painting a harmonious image of the Songhay past. This could best be done by projecting the foreign origin of the fifteenth-century Songhay into the beginning of Gao history. At one stroke both the Zā and the Sunni dynasties had become indigenous and the Sorko governors – the only true Songhay element of Gao dynastic history – had been eliminated. In the final version of the kinglist nothing recalls the Malian origin of the Zās or the Almoravid antecedents of the Sunnis. The only remaining foreign element of Gao history is the myth of the giant Zā al-Ayaman which has transposed historical events of the fifteenth century into the realm of myth.[134] But as a myth of origin it is no longer recognizable as history.

The historical reality has other dimensions: led by Faran Maka Bote and spearheaded by the Sorko, the Songhay invaded the state of the Zās by way of the river Niger. They may have been preceded by earlier infiltrations of Sorko fishermen but at this stage the Songhay were acting on behalf of their king. The prime object of their mission was the occupation of Gao and the reinstallation of the Sunni ruler. However, the conquest of the town did not automatically lead to the eclipse of the military leaders: during the first half of the fifteenth century the effective rulers of Gao were a number of Sorko governors more or less dependent on Old Songhay. Later the Sunnis were able to bring the military leaders under their control. The links of the Songhay with their home country were completely severed after the Kanta dynasty itself had been vanquished towards 1480 and a Katsina dynasty had taken control of the Rima state. Henceforth the kingdom of Gao had become the sole country of the Songhay and the Sunnis were accepted as their supreme leaders.

After the defeat of the Zās in Gao, most of the *Zā-ber-banda* moved eastward to regions later known as Zarmaganda and Zarmatarey. A minority of Zā nobles continued to be active in the area of the Niger bend and in 1493 they supported the coup staged by Askiya Muḥammad against the rule of the Sunnis. However, their association with the new regime did not last long. In 1505 they were in turn evicted from all offices in the Gao state. However the *Zā-ber banda* of the eastern provinces did not live in isolation. As subjects of

[132] *TS*, 3–5/tr. 5–8; *TF* (NH), 326.

[133] According to Harris the name Gunga applied to an ethnic group living near Yauri on the banks of the Niger is derived from the name of the old Kebbi capital ('Notes on Yauri', 291).

[134] Rouch cogently pointed out the similarities between the state tradition of Zā al-Ayaman and the clan tradition of Faran Maka Bote (*Contribution*, 170–1). He did not realize however that the state tradition (recorded in the seventeenth century) was derived from the clan tradition (recorded in the twentieth century).

the Gao state they were exposed to the language and the culture of the victorious Songhay which spread from the royal court of Gao to all the provinces of the state.[135] Being cut off from their Mande brethren in the west the Zarma, as they were now called, could not for long resist the pressure of the Songhay language in spite of the pride they took in their Mali heritage. It was one of the great achievements of the fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Songhay state that it brought about the linguistic and cultural assimilation of most of the subject people. In Kebbi a similar process took place in favour of the Hausa language and a more radical form of Islam.

Although various misconceptions may have crept into the outline of Gao history presented above, it is nevertheless obvious that the ethnic history of the Middle Niger can be more tightly connected with the political history than Hunwick believes – following Maurice Delafosse and Jean Rouch. If researchers one day are able to add the basic elements of the social and economic history of the area to the broad outline of political and ethnic history, then scholarship will have produced something more than bones without flesh. It is not on the basis of narrow text reliance and hypercriticism that any progress in that direction can be achieved

[135] It should be noted that many Sorko are ritualists, not fishermen (Boulnois and Hama, *Empire*, 65–6, 71 de Surdan, *Concepts*, 341). Anthropologists assume that those who live far from the river are descendants of fishermen, but this is not necessarily so. The name 'Sorko' itself, perhaps derived from *sarki* (Hausa and pre-Hausa 'king'), seems to indicate a close connection of this group to the king. 'Kov' and 'Ki', the royal titles of Songhay and Borgu, could be cognate to the second syllable of *sar-ki*.

129. Sur cette date voir le passage de la *Rihla* d'al-Sarakhsī cité par al-Maqqarī (*Corpus*, 372, 433n9).
130. Trimingham, *History*, 55; Levtzion, *Ancient Ghana*, 45–46; Cissoq, *Islamisation*, 42; J. Abun Nasr, *A History of the Maghrib in the Islamic Period*, Cambridge, 1987, 87–96.
131. Voir *supra* n. 65.
132. *Corpus*, 99.
133. On trouvera une liste des stèles découvertes in: C. Flight, "The medieval cemetery at Sane: a history of the site from 1939 to 1950," *Mélanges en hommage à Raymond Mauny*, Paris, 1981, I, 105–06.
134. *Corpus*, 98.
135. Lange, "Rois de Gao-Sané," 262.
136. Lange, "From Mande," 294.
137. *Ibid.*, 297.
138. Avant l'émergence des Almoravides les Massufa contrôlaient la route caravanière passant de Sidjilmasa par Awdaghost au Ghana (*Corpus*, 49 [Ibn Ḥawqal], 65 [al-Bakrī]). D'après Ibn Khaldūn ce fut une guerre entre des Lamtuna et des Massufa qui obligea ʿAbū Bakr b. ʿUmar de retourner avant l'accomplissement de la conquête du Maghreb au Sahara (*Corpus*, 330).
139. *Corpus*, 333.

The Almoravid Expansion and the Downfall of Ghana*)

Dierk Lange (Bayreuth)

Introduction

There is only one fairly reliable guide for the medieval history of West Africa: a summary of events provided by the celebrated Arab historian Ibn Khaldūn. The summary deals with historical upheavals which occurred in the great kingdom of Ghana, situated somewhere between the river Senegal in the west and the town of Gao in the east. The period concerned extends from the mid-eleventh to the mid-thirteenth century; this was for Ghana apparently a period of decline during which the kingdom became a prey of foreign aggressors.

Ibn Khaldūn explains the decline of Ghana by the growing strength of the Saharan Berbers in the time of the Almoravids. More particularly he links the Islamization of Ghana to a Sanhāja conquest that brought havoc on the people. He insinuates that the final *coup de grâce* was given to the kingdom by another devastating conquest, launched by the Soso. He next mentions that the oppressive Soso were vanquished by the Muslim people of Mali. He ends his brief survey of the history of the Western Sūdān by acclaiming the great leader Mārī-Jāṭa (Sundiata), whose descendants were still in power at the time when the information was put down in writing.[1]) Although the events

*) An abbreviated version of this paper was presented at the Third International Conference on Mande Studies (Leiden, March 1995).

[1]) Ibn Khaldūn, *Kitāb al-ʿIbar wa-dīwān al-mubtada' wa-l-khabar fī ayyām al-ʿarab wa-l-ʿajam wa-l-barbar* (Cairo, s.d.), vol. VI, p. 413, transl. Mac Guckin de Slane, *Histoire des Berbères* (Paris, 1852), vol. II, p. 110; W. D. Cooley, *Negroland of the Arabs* (London, 1841), pp. 61–2; D. Conrad and H. Fisher, "The conquest that never was: Ghana and the Almoravids, 1076. I. The external sources", in *History in Africa*, 9 (1982), pp. 38–9; J. Hopkins and N. Levtzion, *Corpus of Early Arabic Sources for West African History* (London, 1981), p. 333; D. Lange, "Das alte Mali und Ghana. Der Beitrag der Oraltraditionen zur Kri-

Der Islam Bd. 73, S. 313–351
© Walter de Gruyter 1996
ISSN 0021-1818

are clearly set in chronological order and in spite of the fact that individual people are given precise historical roles, there are reasons to believe that the brief statement by Ibn Khaldūn, used by all historians of West Africa, gives a one-sided and distorted view of what really happened. Up till now, the medieval history of West Africa is considered to be a domain of Arabists, whatever their qualifications in history. Hence it is not surprising that great efforts have been devoted to the exact rendering of Arabic texts. A glance at the translations offered so far for the key passage of Ghana-Mali history shows that parts of it have been interpreted in different, mutually exclusive ways. In fact, even the vocabulary used by Ibn Khaldūn remains obscure at times.[2]) However, strict reliance on the Arabic text will not help us to elucidate the geographical whereabouts of Ghana, nor to clarify the process of Islamization: neither will the scrutiny of the text by itself disclose the identity of the Soso or help to establish the chronology of events leading to the downfall of Ghana and the emergence of Mali.

In the future more attention should be devoted to source criticism and to solid historical reconstructions built on proper foundations. With respect to the Ghana-Mali paragraph of Ibn Khaldūn, two preliminary questions have to be asked: which were the sources the author used and how did he use them? Fortunately, Ibn Khaldūn begins the paragraph by explaining that he owed precious information on the Western Sūdān to the learned jurisconsult *shaykh* ʿUthmān from Ghana, whom he had met in Egypt during his pilgrimage in 796/1394.[3]) Since he himself never visited the *bilād al-sūdān*, he had to rely on either knowledgeable Arabs or Africans whom he could meet in North Africa. These were all more or less enlightened Muslims. *Shaykh* ʿUthmān was a great legal scholar in Ghana. In fact, Ibn Khaldūn considered him to be "the most learned, religious and celebrated of them".[4]) Being neither a trader, nor a traveller, nor a slave, he was bound to be heavily biased in favor of Islam.

Furthermore, it has to be taken into consideration that *shaykh* ʿUthmān, most likely Ibn Khaldūn's only informant for the history of Ghana and early Mali, had to rely on his personal recollections of traditions told to him by others. Since the important events connected with the Almoravid incursion and the Islamization of Ghana occurred more than three centuries ago, it is quite likely that the jurisconsult provided the historian with a one-sided, incomplete and probably distorted account of events. This account was then used by the historian in such a way that it fitted his own theories and preconceptions. Hence, in spite of its clarity and vigor, the text as it stands, should be treated as a heavily biased account of an oral tradition based on a single informant. That it was already written down at the end of the fourteenth century by an Arab historian does not add to the credibility of the informations it contains.

On the other hand, the historian should also pay due attention to the fact that Ibn Khaldūn treats the past of Ghana and Mali as part of the history of the Maghrib: states rose, stagnated, declined and crumbled, because the tribes behind them grew powerful, consolidated their position of strength, then weakened and disappeared after defeat by other tribes.[5]) Likewise, three explicatory factors underly his summary of Western Sūdānic history and make it so attractive: tribal vigor, military conquests and the progress of Islam.

According to Ibn Khaldūn tribes were the most important agents of change in the Western Sūdān: first, the tribe of Ghana (the Soninke), then the Berbers, and finally the tribe of Mali (the Malinke). As for *shaykh* ʿUthmān, he certainly was careful to distinguish between the tribes of the nomads, the sedentary ethnic groups, the royal clans and the noble castes. However, these distinctions were probably too subtle for the foreign observer, who was eager to comprehend the basic outline of the events in terms which were familiar to him. Therefore we have to suspect that the tribal factor and the overall antagonism between nomadic and sedentary peoples which were the moving forces of West African history according to the text, corresponded to

---

tik einer historiographischen Fiktion", in *Historische Zeitschrift*, 255 (1992) p. 593.

[2]) An example is the term *ḥimā'* translated by R. Dozy as "parc, lieu planté d'arbres" (*Supplément aux dictionnaires arabes*, [Leiden, 1881] vol. I, p. 329). In the Ghana passage Cooley and De Slane have it as "territory" (*Negroland*, p. 62; *Histoire*, vol. II, p. 110). J. Cuoq has "défenses" (*Recueil des sources arabes concernant l'Afrique occidentale du VIII^e au XVI^e siècle*, [Paris, 1975], p. 343). Hopkins and Levtzion omit it (*Corpus*, p. 333), Conrad and Fisher have "sanctuary" ("Conquest, I", p. 39). According to a parallel passage in *al-Ibar*, VI, p. 375 (tr. De Slane, *Histoire*, II, p. 70) the author probably had in mind a "parc of cattle", so that the opposition in the text between *ḥimā'* and *bilād* may be understood to refer to pastoral and agricultural land (which was conquered).

[3]) *Corpus*, p. 333

[4]) *Ibid*., p. 333.

[5]) Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddima*, trans. V. Monteil, *Discours sur l'histoire universelle* (Beirut, 1967–8), 3 vols.

Ibn Khaldūns extrapolations from North African history and not to the actual account he was given by his informant.[6])

In North Africa, all major historical changes were brought about by tribal conquests. The account given of the fall of Ghana and the rise of Mali follows the same pattern. Did *shaykh* ʿUthmān present such a clear-cut picture of Ghana-Mali history? In West African history, sweeping conquests launched by tribal forces are rare. More frequently, we find clans fighting for power within preexisting states.[7]) Such power-struggles may have been interpreted by Ibn Khaldūn in the light of North African history.

Finally, there is the overall stress put on Islam. Here we have to consider that in fact the regional history of West Africa must have been shaped by concrete actors such as kings, court officials and dynastic factions. *Shaykh* ʿUthmān certainly had much of this detailed information, but such details were too confusing for the foreign observer, who wanted to learn about the rise of Islam and the emergence of Mali, not about dynastic politics and social distinctions. The learned pilgrim would appear to have gone a long way to meet these interests. At the same time, he could not avoid summarizing the events in such a way that his own perception of what was valid – in terms of his religion – would color all the rest.

Nobody can claim that a solid reconstruction of the transition period from Ghana to Mali can be based solely on the distorted oral account of a single informant. Therefore we have to search for supplementary sources. Some historians, well versed with Arabic texts and the methods of textual criticism, would like to restrict their endeavor to the written sources alone. By doing so they miss the only way to interpret the superficial accounts provided by outsiders in terms of the dynastic history of the people concerned.

In fact, we dispose of an oral source that is as valuable as the account of Ibn Khaldūn for our purpose – the Soninke tradition of origine, the so-called legend of Wagadu.[8]) According to the legend, the

[6]) Lange, "Altes Ghana", pp. 593, 621–2.

[7]) For instance the struggle between the Sayfūwa and the Dūguwa in Kānem-Borno and the struggle between the Lekawa and the Lailabuwa in Kebbi (D. Lange, "Die Hausa-Traditionen in ihrer Abhängigkeit von Kanem Borno und Nubien", in *Anthropos*, 88 [1993], pp. 67–70; *id.*, "Das frühe Kebbi und Mali", in *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, 141 [1991], pp. 149–155).

[8]) L. Tautin, "Légende et tradition des Soninké relatives à l'empire de

kingdom of the Soninke disintegrated and the people dispersed because of the treacherous breach of a pact between the Soninke and the snake Wagadu Bida. To fulfill the pact, the people of Wagadu had to sacrifice the most beautiful maiden to Bida every year. In exchange, the snake provided sufficient rainfall and gold to assure prosperity. The pact was broken by a young man called Mamadi who saved the life of his beloved by beheading the snake before the girl could be sacrificed. The dying snake pronounced a dreadful curse which caused the desiccation of the land and the disappearance of the gold.[9])

Many questions come to mind when we try to understand the historical content of the story. On one hand, the reader will inevitably focus first on the killing of the snake Bida. What does it represent? Is it the actual elimination of the last pagan king or the destruction of divine kingship?[10]) Does it present the downfall of the Soninke state as such? On the other hand, due attention has to be paid to the fact that the snake-killing motif recurs in other West African traditions, particularly in Gao. Is it possible to discover any link between these accounts, or do we have to content ourselves with the idea of a floating motif that expresses almost anything, including the on-going process of climatic deterioration that made the region of Wagadu in the end unsuitable for sedentary life?[11])

In view of this uncertainty the historian who tries to identify the person who actually killed the snake may at first appear to be naive. The legend calls him Mamadi, which suggests an Islamic identity. In

Ghanata", in *Bulletin de géographie historique et descriptive*, 10 (1895), pp. 472–480. M. Adam, "Légendes historiques du pays de Nioro (Sahel)", in *Revue coloniale*, 3 (1903–4), pp. 81–95. Lt. Lanrezac, "Au Soudan. La légende historique", in *La revue indigène*, 18 (1907), p. 383. R. Arnaud, "La singulière légende des Soninkes", *Islam et la politique musulmane française en AOF* (Paris, 1912), pp. 144–158. M. Delafosse, *Haut Sénégal-Niger* (Paris, 1912), vol. I, pp. 256–262. *id.*, "Traditions historiques et légendaires du Soudan occidental", in *Renseignements coloniaux*, 8 (1913), pp. 292–7. Ch. Monteil, "La légende de Ouagadou et l'origine des Soninke", in *Mélanges ethnologiques* (Dakar, 1953), pp. 361–408. G. Dieterlen and D. Sylla, *L'empire de Ghana. La Wagadou et les traditions de Ferere* (Paris, 1992).

[9]) N. Levtzion, *Ancient Ghana and Mali* (London, 1973), pp. 16–8.

[10]) Levtzion suggests that the killing of the snake represents the break with the ancestral religion and the adoption of Islam (*Ancient Ghana*, p. 47).

[11]) D. Conrad and H. Fisher stress the importance of the drought theme in the legend ("The conquest that never was: Ghana and the Almoravids, 1076 II. The local oral sources", in *History in Africa*, 10 [1983], pp. 63–8).

spite of the uncertainty concerning either the historical or the mythical character of the legend, this leads to the question whether the negative hero, who brought disaster on his people, was a Soninke or an outsider, a local king or perhaps an Almoravid leader? We might also ask, whether the name more generally refers to the rise of Islam in Ghana or perhaps to the Almoravid movement and hence to the Sanhāja conquest, rather than to a particular individual?[12])

Most of these questions have been asked by other historians, but no convincing answers could be given.[13]) Therefore we will here turn to the more concrete problem of dating the catastrophe that befell the Soninke people or, to be more precise, relating it to a specific event of dynastic history. In this respect, the legend provides a precious clue, because it links the killing of Bida to the fall of the Sisse dynasty. Since the Sisse were not the last dynasty of Wagadu in terms of the legend, we can expect to find out at exactly what period the Sisse were replaced by a set of rulers who must have held power during the decline of the kingdom.[14])

In addition to Ibn Khaldūns text and to the legend of Wagadu, some other sources of information, including the Zarma and Diawara traditions of origin, are available to us.[15]) We also dispose of a number of early written sources that were recorded earlier in time, and which therefore are closer to the events than the fourteenth century account of Ibn Khaldūn. Some records are even strictly contemporary. But the closer we come to the events, the more we have to strain our imaginations in order to fit the information contained in our sources into a meanigful historical reconstruction.

---

[12]) The idea of a Sanhāja conquest of Ghana is categorically rejected by Conrad and Fisher ("Conquest, II", p.68).

[13]) We owe the most thorough examination of the written and oral sources to Conrad and Fisher "Conquest, I", pp.21–59; "Conquest, II", pp.53–78). Delafosse did not try to make use of the snake-killing incident in his reconstruction of the Almoravid conquest (*Haut-Sénégal*, vol.II, pp.53–5). Levtzion refers the incident to the change of religion (*Ancient Ghana*, 17–8, 47). P. Farias thinks that the incident reflects myth, not history ("Great states revisited", *Journal of African History*, 15 [1974], pp.484–5).

[14]) D. Lange, "The Almoravids and the Islamization of the great states of West Africa", *Itinéraires d'Orient: Hommages à Claude Cahen*, in *Res Orientalia*, 6 (1994), p.68.

[15]) F. Mounkaila, *Mythe et histoire dans la geste de Zabarkane* (Niamey, 1989); Delafosse, *Haut-Sénégal*, vol.I, pp.266–7, 271–6; G. Boyer, *Un peuple de l'ouest soudanais: les Diawara* (Dakar, 1953), pp.21–30.

For instance, should al-Bakrī's precious account, containing besides the famous description of the funeral of the divine king a number of detailed itineraries placing the capital of Ghana roughly in the semidesert region of Kumbi Saleh, be taken at face value?[16]) Further are we entitled to consider al-Zuhrī's remark that the people of Ghana adopted Islam in the days of a certain Massūfa chief to point to a Sanhāja conquest of Ghana under the famous Lamtūnī Abū Bakr b. 'Umar?[17]) The epitaphs of Gao-Sané are most difficult to interpret. They provide a number of royal names, but to whom do they refer? To Berber chiefs or to local black African rulers, or even to the Sisse kings, as I have suggested elsewhere?[18])

In fact, all of the sources used in the following study have been known for some time, but some of them did not seem relevant to the history of Ghana. In other words, up to now it was impossible to tie the oral traditions into the chronological framework provided by the written sources. Therefore the various attempts to reconstruct the disintegration of the Ghana empire failed to take into account the key events leading to the triumpl of Islam on the Middle Niger.

I. The Sisse dynasty and the location of Wagadu and Ghana

The most relevant information provided by the legend of Wagadu on the downfall of Ghana has been ignored by previous researchers. Indeed, instead of the snake-killing episode, prominence should be given to an earlier passage dealing with the origins of the different clans of the Soninke. We may deduce from this passage that the prestigious Sisse clan ruled over Wagadu in the heyday of the kingdom and that they were followed by the Ture, who ruled at a time when the kingdom was in decline.[19])

The legend of Wagadu explains the origins of the Soninke in terms similar to those used by other traditions of genesis. The great patriarch of the Soninke, Dinga, immigrated with many followers from either Israel, Yemen, India or simply from beyond Egypt, according

---

[16]) *Corpus*, pp.79–86.

[17]) *Ibid.*, p.98.

[18]) D. Lange, "La chute de la dynastie des Sisse: considerations sur la date et la location de l'empire du Ghana à partir de l'histoire de Gao", in *History in Africa*, vol.23 (1996) (in press).

[19]) Lange, "Almoravids", p.68.

spite of the uncertainty concerning either the historical or the mythical character of the legend, this leads to the question whether the negative hero, who brought disaster on his people, was a Soninke or an outsider, a local king or perhaps an Almoravid leader? We might also ask, whether the name more generally refers to the rise of Islam in Ghana or perhaps to the Almoravid movement and hence to the Ṣanhāja conquest, rather than to a particular individual?[12])

Most of these questions have been asked by other historians, but no convincing answers could be given.[13]) Therefore we will here turn to the more concrete problem of dating the catastrophe that befell the Soninke people or, to be more precise, relating it to a specific event of dynastic history. In this respect, the legend provides a precious clue, because it links the killing of Bida to the fall of the Sisse dynasty. Since the Sisse were not the last dynasty of Wagadu in terms of the legend, we can expect to find out at exactly what period the Sisse were replaced by a set of rulers who must have held power during the decline of the kingdom.[14])

In addition to Ibn Khaldūns text and to the legend of Wagadu, some other sources of information, including the Zarma and Diawara traditions of origin, are available to us.[15]) We also dispose of a number of early written sources that were recorded earlier in time, and which therefore are closer to the events than the fourteenth century account of Ibn Khaldūn. Some records are even strictly contemporary. But the closer we come to the events, the more we have to strain our imaginations in order to fit the information contained in our sources into a meanigful historical reconstruction.

---

[12]) The idea of a Ṣanhāja conquest of Ghana is categorically rejected by Conrad and Fisher ("Conquest, II", p.68).

[13]) We owe the most thorough examination of the written and oral sources to Conrad and Fisher "Conquest, I", pp.21–59; "Conquest, II", pp.53–78). Delafosse did not try to make use of the snake-killing incident in his reconstruction of the Almoravid conquest (*Haut-Sénégal*, vol.II, pp.53–5). Levtzion refers the incident to the change of religion (*Ancient Ghana*, 17–8, 47). P. Farias thinks that the incident reflects myth, not history ("Great states revisited", *Journal of African History*, 15 [1974], pp.484–5).

[14]) D. Lange, "The Almoravids and the Islamization of the great states of West Africa", *Itinéraires d'Orient: Hommages à Claude Cahen*, in *Res Orientalia*, 6 (1994), p.68.

[15]) F. Mounkaila, *Mythe et histoire dans la geste de Zabarkane* (Niamey, 1989); Delafosse, *Haut-Sénégal*, vol.I, pp.266–7, 271–6; G. Boyer, *Un peuple de l'ouest soudanais: les Diawara* (Dakar, 1953), pp.21–30.

For instance, should al-Bakrī's precious account, containing besides the famous description of the funeral of the divine king a number of detailed itineraries placing the capital of Ghana roughly in the semidesert region of Kumbi Saleh, be taken at face value?[16]) Further are we entitled to consider al-Zuhrī's remark that the people of Ghana adopted Islam in the days of a certain Massūfa chief to point to a Ṣanhāja conquest of Ghana under the famous Lamtūnī Abū Bakr b. 'Umar?[17]) The epitaphs of Gao Saneé are most difficult to interpret. They provide a number of royal names but to whom do they refer? To Berber chiefs or to local black African rulers, or even to the Sisse kings, as I have suggested elsewhere?[18])

In fact, all of the sources used in the following study have been known for some time, but some of them did not seem relevant to the history of Ghana. In other words, up to now it was impossible to tie the oral traditions into the chronological framework provided by the written sources. Therefore the various attempts to reconstruct the disintegration of the Ghana empire failed to take into account the key events leading to the triumpf of Islam on the Middle Niger.

1 The Sisse dynasty and the location of Wagadu and Ghana

The most relevant information provided by the legend of Wagadu on the downfall of Ghana has been ignored by previous researchers. Indeed, instead of the snake killing episode, prominence should be given to an earlier passage dealing with the origins of the different clans of the Soninke. We may deduce from this passage that the prestigious Sisse clan ruled over Wagadu in the heyday of the kingdom and that they were followed by the Ture, who ruled at a time when the kingdom was in decline.[19])

The legend of Wagadu explains the origins of the Soninke in terms similar to those used by other traditions of genesis. The great patriarch of the Soninke, Dinga, immigrated with many followers from either Israel, Yemen, India or simply from beyond Egypt, according

---

[16]) *Corpus*, pp.79–86.

[17]) *Ibid*., p.98.

[18]) D. Lange, "La chute de la dynastie des Sisse: considérations sur la dislocation de l'empire du Ghana à partir de l'histoire de Gao", in *History in Africa* 23 (1996) (in press).

[19]) Lange, "Almoravids", p.68.

to the different versions of the legend. After his arrival in West Africa, he married five different wives. The first was barren, but all the Soninke clans and even some neighbouring clans of the Berbers are supposed to have originated from the four others. His second wife, Assa-Kule, gave birth to the Djikine (Diafunu) and to the Souare (Dia). His third wife, Diangana-Boro, gave birth to six children; the last of them was the snake Wagadu Bida. His fourth wife, Kantana-Boro, gave birth to the five Sisse kings mentioned by name. The first of these, Diabe Sisse, concluded the pact with Wagadu Bida. Among the descendants of Dinga's fifth wife, Singa-Gille, we find the Ture.[20])

Knowledge of the legend of Wagadu is not restricted to the Soninke. Some isolated elements of the legend can be traced in a Songhay epic from the lake district of the Niger, others in the chronicles of Timbuktu. The transmission of residual key-elements of the Wagadu legend among the Songhay can be explained by the fact that the lake district and the more eastern parts of the Middle Niger were inhabited by Soninke prior to the Songhay expansion in the fifteenth century.[21]) Going one step further, it can even been postulated that Wagadu itself, the prestigious early kingdom of the Soninke, was located precisely in the lake district of the Niger, which was known in Timbuktu as Tendirma.[22]) Soninke traditionists probably find it difficult in our days to indicate the precise whereabouts of ancient Wagadu, because this region has been incorporated into the Songhay world. Once we have shown that there are good reasons to locate Wagadu in Tendirma, we will turn our attention to the geographical description provided by al-Bakrī and other Arab authors of medieval Ghana. Here again, Tendirma and not Kumbi Saleh is – as we will see – the best candidate for the capital of the greatest West African kingdom known to the outside world.

Beginning with the residual elements of the Wagadu legend, we have to consider the two patriarchs, Dinga and Diabe Sisse, and take into account the royal titles or epithets Kaya-Magha and Tunka. Ac-

[20]) Monteil, "Légende", pp.372–5.

[21]) D.Lange, "From Mande to Songhay: towards a political and ethnic history of medieval Gao", in *Journal of African History*, 35 (1994), pp.285–8, 293–9.

[22]) Al-Sa'dī, *Ta'rīkh al-Sūdān*, ed. and transl. O.Houdas (Paris, 1898–1900), pp.72, 82/tr.119, 136 (quoted as *TS*); Ibn al-Mukhtār, *Ta'rīkh al-Fattāsh*, ed. and transl. O.Houdas and M.Delafosse (Paris, 1913), pp.40/tr.74 (quoted as *TF*).

cording to the epic of the Western Songhay, Dinga was abandoned at birth and later became a wild and invincible, but also erratic hero. He fought against everyone he met, killing most of them. In his long battle against a marabout, he was helped by his idols, who proved superior to the god of the Muslims. Finally, he married the daughter of the king and then became king himself.[23]) The name of the hero, the pre-Islamic worldview and the hero's rise to kingship show that the story is related to the legend of Wagadu.[24]) Although in the context of the Songhay society the epic no longer explains the origin of kingship, it still deals recognizably with the transition from myth to history. Once Dinga was no longer associated with the great ancient kingdom from which all segments of the society originated, he was bound to be turned into a more popular, less commanding figure. However, the Baal-like character of the epic's hero was probably not invented *ex nihilo*; he would appear to have preserved an important trait, hardly perceptible in the legend[25]), of the great patriarch which we also find in the Songhay god Dongo.[26])

Next we should consider Diabe Sisse, the son of Dinga, who concluded the pact with Wagadu Bida according to which each year the most beautiful maiden had to be sacrificed to the snake. It would seem that the same figure survived until the seventeenth century in the tradition of Gao as Diâber al-Yaman or Zā al-Ayaman.[27]) The latter emendation of the name is obviously due to the attempt to make it fit to the local folk etymology which explains the name Dia by the Arabic jā', prounounced zā' – "he came from" (Yaman).[28]) It is easy to recognize in the Gao form Diâber the Soninke Diabe, the suffix *-be* being probably equivalent to the postpositioned Bambara-Form *-ba* meaning like the Songhay *ber* "great". Hence we have in both cases a founding

[23]) Depuis Yacouba, *Essai de méthode pratique pour l'étude de la langue songoi* (Paris, 1917), pp.71–104.

[24]) Conrad and Fisher note that in some versions of the legend it is Dinga who strikes a bargain with the snake ("Conquest, II", pp.55, 71 n.159).

[25]) Perhaps the explosive violence between Dinga and the three female devils (goddesses) (Monteil, "Légende", pp.371–2) still reflects the original character of the patriarch hero/god.

[26]) J.Rouch, *La religion et la magie songhay* (Paris, 1960), pp.63–9; D.Lange, "Der Ursprung des westafrikanischen Wettergottes Schango", in *Saeculum*, 45 (1994), pp.213–238.

[27]) *TF (NH)*, p.326; *TS*, pp.2/tr.4.

[28]) *TS*, pp.3/tr.6.

hero called Dia, who came from Yemen and interacted with the snake, fish or dragon. The main difference between the versions consists in the behavior towards the dragon: while the Wagadu legend distinguishes between the pacifier and the killer of the dragon, the first being Diabe Sisse and the second Mamadi the Muslim, the Gao legend has Diâber as the dragon-killer and hence the state-founder. In view of these differences one might have supposed that we are dealing here with two entirely different traditions of genesis. In fact, there are a number of independent reasons indicating that the Dia dynasty originated from Tendirma.[29]) Hence Diâber, the founder of the Dia, must in the first place have been associated with the founding of a kingdom situated in the west and not in the east, as the reference to Kūkiyā, which actually belongs to an older period, would seem to suggest. But this kingdom of the west is clearly localized by the Zarma tradition in Tendirma. The myth of Diâber the dragon-killer, the Zarma tradition of genesis and the origin of the Dia dynasty (as will be seen later) all point to the location of Wagadu in Tendirma. They exclude an identification of Wagadu with Kumbi Saleh.

A third argument in favour of an identification of Wagadu with Tendirma is provided by an isolated Songhay tradition from Tera. According to this tradition, upon their arrival in Tendirma the Songhay met a king called Kayamba. In a later version we learn that Kayamba is equivalent to Kaya-Manga.[30]) We know from the abreviated version of the Soninke legend recorded by the chroniclers of Timbuktu that Kaya-Magha was the most prestigious title given to the king of Wagadu.[31]) The form Kayamba is linguistically equivalent to Kaya-Magha because *-mba* corresponds to Malinke *māmba* meaning like *magha/manga* "powerful ruler".[32]) On account of the similarities between the tradition of Tera and the *Ta'rīkhs*, one might have thought that the former derives from the latter, but such a *feedback* from written material into the oral tradition can be excluded precisely because the original tradition gives the name of the ruler as Kayamba, not as Kaya-Magha.

---

[29]) Lange, "Chute", chapt. 4 (in press).

[30]) J.-P. Olivier de Sardan, *Concepts et conceptions songhay-zarma* (Paris, 1982), pp. 287–8; D. Laya, *Traditions historiques zarma-songhais* (Niamey, 1977), p. 33.

[31]) In *TF*, pp. 41/tr. 75, given as a title in *TS* pp. 9/tr. 18, as a name.

[32]) M. Delafosse, *La langue mandingue et ses dialectes* (Paris, 1955), vol. II pp. 15, 493.

The chroniclers of Timbuktu do not mention the epithet Kaya-Magha with respect to Tendirma, but they record the survival of two other Mande titles or epithets, *Mansa* and *Tunkara* in this region. *Mansa* is well-known as the title of the Keita kings of Mali.[33]) During the Songhay period the *Mansa* title was held not only by the kings of Mali but also by the subordinate kings of the Bara province, who were the only officials of Songhay who could veto a decision of the Askia.[34]) The epithet Tunkara is derived from *Tunka*, the title of the kings of Ghana mentioned by al-Bakrī.[35]) In Songhay, two officials based in Tendirma were addressed as *Tunka*: the Balama' and the Kurmina Fari.[36]) These names and titles, used in Tendirma, may be interpreted as residual traces of a Soninke kingdom which survived the Songhay expansion of the fifteenth century. They seem to have been attached originally to the great king of Wagadu himself and not to any minor subordinate king. They therefore give further support to the idea that Wagadu was situated in Tendirma and not in Kumbi Saleh, or in any other area inhabited by the Soninke at present.

The preceding identification of Wagadu's geographical site on the basis of oral traditions makes it necessary to reconsider the location of Ghana. The most detailed contemporary description of Ghana is provided by the eleventh century Andalusian geographer al-Bakrī.[37]) His account contains the names of two kings, gives some information on the capital and its environment, depicts a royal funeral and mentions some other religious practices. Furthermore, it provides a number of itineraries which make it possible to relate the capital of Ghana to neighbouring towns, some of which are identifiable. The most important itinerary for our discussion connects Ghana with the town of Awdaghost, which is thought to be identical with the modern Tegdaoust in Mauretania. Like Ibn Ḥawqal in the tenth century, al-Bakrī places Ghana at ten days from Awdaghost.[38]) At a rate of 32 km per day, this distance corresponds exactly to the 320 km between Tegdaoust

---

[33]) *Corpus*, pp. 333–7 (Ibn Khaldūn).

[34]) *TF* pp. 11, 69/tr. 14–5, 132–3.

[35]) *Corpus*, p. 79. Similarly we have the Manding forms *manga ra* (of the lord) and *mansa ra* (of royal descent) (Delafosse, *Langue*, vol. II, pp. 482, 493).

[36]) *TF*, pp. 135/tr. 240 (Balama'); *TS*, pp. 128/tr. 204 (Balama', Kurmina Fari).

[37]) *Corpus*, pp. 84–5.

[38]) *Ibid.*, pp. 46, 73.

and Kumbi Saleh. From other indications it can also be deduced that Kumbi Saleh was one of the capitals of Ghana: al-Bakrī notes that Ghana was properly called Awkar, a name which is at present given to a desert situated to the north of Kumbi Saleh. He states that the people of Ghana use water of wells for drinking and for growing vegetables, asserts that the countryside of the town is not populous; he provides an itinerary leading to the west which after fifteen days leads to a gold producing area (Bambouk), another which in the east passes Awghām and then leads to Tīraqqā (Bourem), and a third which crosses after seven days an outlet of the Nile (the *Fala de Molodo*), and finally reaches Yarisnā, the town of the Wangara (Dia).[39]) The capital of Ghana, situated in a semi-desert region and taken as a point of departure of various itineraries must have been Kumbi Saleh.

On the other hand, al-Bakrī provides some information on Ghana which applies to Tendirma: the description of the funeral practices followed by the people of Ghana with respect to their kings[40]), the indication concerning the groves and thickets surrounding the town of the king, the comparison of the town of Ghana with Gao in contradistinction to Tadmekka and the statement that the people of Ghana sow their crops twice, once during the season when in their region the Nile overflows and once in the moist earth when the water has retreated and the localization of Safanqū on the Nile (Niger) at a distance of three days from Ghana.[41]) Further it should be noted that two geographers of the twelfth century, al-Idrīsī and al-Zuhrī, place Ghana either on the Nile or else situate Ghana at a distance of fifteen days from Tadmekka.[42]) Both indications support the identification of Ghana with Tendirma.

[39]) *Corpus*, pp. 79–81; J.O. Hunwick, C. Meillassoux and J.-L. Triaud, "La géographie du Soudan d'après al-Bakrī", *Mélanges en hommage à Raymond Mauny* (Paris, 1981), pp. 401–428; Lange, "Altes Ghana", pp. 615–7.

[40]) L. Desplagnes, "Étude sur les tumuli du Killi dans la région de Goundam", in *L'Anthropologie*, 14 (1903), pp. 151–172; R. Mauny, *Tableau géographique de l'ouest africain au Moyen Age* (Dakar, 1961), pp. 92–111; M. Raimbault and K. Sanogo (eds.), *Recherches archéologiques au Mali* (Paris, 1991), pp. 217–516.

[41]) *Corpus*, pp. 80, 82, 85.

[42]) *Ibid.*, pp. 110; 98. Levtzion thinks that al-Idrīsī systematically places all towns of the Western Sūdān on a river called Nile (*Corpus*, p. 390 n. 8). This argument ignores the fact that the geographer is reluctant to locate Gao on the Nile/Niger, although this would have been correct, and that he situates Malal on a river flowing into the Nile (*Corpus*, pp. 108, 113).

On account of these divergent definitions of Ghana, al-Bakrī's text should be read as if two accounts referring to two different Ghanas have been juxtaposed without any change. This method is clearly apparent from the two itineraries between Ghana and Tadmekka: the first starts from Kumbi Saleh, then leads to Awghām and reaches the Niger at Ra's al-Mā' (Timbuktu/Kabara) where "the Nile comes out of the land of the Sūdān"; the second starts from Tendirma and reaches the Nile at Safanqū (Timbuktu/Kabara) after only three days.[43]) It has to be noted that in the first case, where Kumbi Saleh is called Ghana, the region of Tendirma, which is crossed by the Niger before its arrival at Kabara, is vaguely referred to as "the land of the Sūdān", in spite of the fact that it was the centre of a great kingdom.

If we now consider the description of the kingdom of the Daw and the kingdom of Malal, said to lie beyond Yarisnā (Dia), the first stretching over a distance of more than eight days and the second being well-know because of its Muslim king[44]), we come to the conclusion that Daw extended to the north-east of Dia and corresponded to Ghana/Tendirma, while Malal lay further downstream on the Niger at Gao. These identifications are supported by the fact that in Daw we can recognize the royal title Dia, probably restricted to Ghana Tendirma prior to the Almoravid period, while Malal and Mali could be synonyms of "capital" or "big town".[45])

If we apply the same approach to the description of Ghana provided by al-Bakrī we have to decide with respect to each item of information whether it refers to Kumbi Saleh or to Tendirma. Although in some cases the origin of the information remains doubtful, most often it is possible to distinguish between two layers of information corresponding to two different kingdoms known by the same name. On the other hand, it can hardly be doubted that these kingdoms were part of an empire which stretched from Gao in the east to Kumbi Saleh and beyond in the west. Hence it would appear to be more appropriate to distinguish between the capital of the supreme king, situated in Tendirma, and the capitals of vassal kings like Gao, Alūkan, Samaqanda et probably also Kumbi Saleh. There is even a third possibility according to which Kumbi Saleh was the second residence of the king of Ghana and the siege of a lieutenant who represented the king in his absence. Indeed, the reference of the *Ta'rīkh al-Fattāsh* to Kumbi as the ca-

[43]) *Ibid.*, pp. 84–5.

[44]) *Ibid.*, p. 82.

[45]) Monteil, "Empires", p. 298.

pital of the Kaya-Magha and the notion of a legendary pact concluded in this town between Diabe Sisse and Bida must have some basis in history.[46]) But the latter elements should not be over-estimated because, as will be seen later, Kumbi Saleh was the scene of important historical events towards the end of Sisse rule. It was probably on account of these events during the Almoravid period and also on account of impressive archaeological remains that the site of Kumbi Saleh later became associated with the foundation of the great Soninke kingdom.

However, in spite of the correspondences noted, there is no direct proof for the identity of Wagadu and Ghana. In particular, it is impossible to correlate any of the two royal names mentioned by al-Bakrī with the Sisse kings of the legend of Wagadu and the Dia kings of the Songhay chronicles. Al-Bakrī provides the names Basī and Tunka-Manīn, or rather Manīn, if we disconnect the name from the title. The Wagadu legend gives the names Diabe, Tane, Tane-Fankante, Mamadu and Kumma. The Dia list has Kinkin, Kūkuraï/Diatakore, Yama Kimbaw, Yama Dunku and Yama Karawaï as predecessors of Kosso Muslim, the king who belongs to the Almoravid period.[47]) In view of this negative onomastic evidence one may be tempted to conclude that the three sources refer to different kingdoms. But the absence of any correlation is not necessarily significant, because the names given may represent popular nicknames, surnames known by foreigners or epithets. Also, the internal sources may have distorted the names of the Almoravid period beyond recognition. Moreover, the possibility that Muslim court-historians later may have suppressed the last names of the pre-Islamic period because of the intense antagonism between the first Muslim and the last pagan ruler cannot be excluded. In the absence of any tie-in between the contemporary written records and the oral traditions, it would have been very difficult to give precedence to any of these possibilities. But vague possibilities cannot support a solid historical reconstruction based on chronology.

2. Kema-Magha, king of Ghana: 1076–1087

From the middle of the eleventh century onwards, the Western Sudan was influenced by the Almoravid expansion. The Ṣanhāja conquered Awdaghost in 1054, soon after they had captured Sijilmāsa at

[46]) *TF*, p. 76.

[47]) Lange, "Chute", chap. 4 (*in press*).

the northern end of the great West Saharan trade route.[48]) They punished the inhabitants of the town for having accepted the rule of the pagan king of Ghana.[49]) With the conquest of Awdaghost, the Almoravids became an immediate threat for the trading town of Kumbi Saleh. In 1063, Tunka-Manīn ascended the throne of Ghana, either in Kumbi Saleh or in Tendirma. He was still reigning in 1058 at the time al-Bakrī was writing. From al-Bakrī's description it would appear that Ghana was not affected by the rise of the Almoravids, however, this impression derives from the geographer's own misappreciation of the movement's military potential.[50]) In fact, it is quite likely that the installation of Tunka-Manīn, who was a son of a sister of his predecessor Basī, resulted from a deliberate attempt to thwart the progress of the Muslim party at the royal court of Ghana.[51]) According to the legend of Wagadu, the last or last but one king of Wagadu was a Muslim. He must have reigned some time after al-Bakrīs detailed report on Ghana. One may speculate that he was the immediate successor of Tunka-Manīn.

In fact, a name common to a number of internal sources provides the badly needed tie-in between the written and the oral evidence. This name occurs in the legend of Wagadu, in the epitaphs of Gao-Sane, in the list of the Dia kings of Gao, in the Zarma tradition of origin and in the legend of the Diawara. It refers to the last king of the Sisse who was a Muslim. The name has two forms: Kema, a pagan form, and Muhammad, a Muslim form. Because these two forms, which appear in the five different sources in related contexts, we can be sure that we are dealing here with one and the same person.[52])

The epitaphs of Gao-Sané provide strictly contemporary evidence concerning the names and the exact dates of death of three successive kings: Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muhammad b. ʿAbd Allāh b. Zāghē, who died 1 *muharram* 494 (= 6 November 1100), Abū Bakr b. Abī Quhāfa, who died 19 *rajab* 503 (= 1 January 1110), *and Yāmā b. Kamā b. Zāghē, called ʿUmar b. al-Khattāb who died* 17 *muharram* 514 (18 April

[48]) *Corpus* (al Bakrī), p. 73.

[49]) *Ibid.*, p. 74.

[50]) *Ibid.*, p. 75.

[51]) Levtzion suggests that Tunka Manin was appointed in order to protect the kingdom from the pressure of the nomads ("Was royal succession in ancient Ghana matrilineal?", in *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 5 [1972], pp. 92–3).

[52]) Lange, "Chute", chapt. 4 (in press).

1120).[53]) A glance at the Arabic names shows that they correspond to the names of the Prophet Muḥammad and of the first two Califs who succeeded him as leaders of the Muslim community. We may therefore suppose that they were not personal names, but designations adopted by the rulers after their rise to power to increase their religious and worldly prestige. Only the name Yāmā given to the third king is strictly personal; the associated name of the father, K.mā, could either refer to the second or to the first king of Gao-Sané, but if we take into account that the former only reigned for ten years, it seems more likely that it was the personal name of Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad. That we are dealing here with a dynasty and not with isolated kings belonging to different families is shown by the name Zāghē, which obviously designates the dynastic ancestor.[54])

At first sight, the Arabic loan names may appear to be pompous and out of place in the African context. However, if we consider that the first two stelae were imported from Almeria in Spain and that the epitaphs were beautifully sculptured[55]), we have to admit that we are dealing here not with minor boastful kings, but with a dynasty of high standing having connexions with the outside world. Further, it has to be considered that the stelae were not found in the royal town of Gao, but in the trading twin-town of Gao-Sané. For these and other reasons, it is unlikely that the Zāghē belonged to the local dynasty of Gao.[56])

The kings of Gao-Sané would not interest us very much in connexion with the history of Ghana if we could not identify them with the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth king of the list of the Ghana-related Dia kings of Gao.[57]) We therefore know that Muḥammad, the first king of Gao-Sané, was locally called Kosso-Dārē, a name which in Soninke can be understood to mean "Kosso the Great". Furthermore we know that the second king was called Hizka-Zunku-Dam. This is an epithet, not a proper personal name. For the third king we have the personal name, Yāmā, and the name of the father, Kemā.

---

[53]) J. Sauvaget, "Les épitaphes royales de Gao", in *Bulletin de l'IFAN*, XII (1950), pp. 418–440.

[54]) Earlier I thought that the kings of Gao-Sané were local Berbers who did not belong to a single family ("Les rois de Gao-Sané et les Almoravides", in *Journal of African History*, 32 [1991], p. 263, but see my "Chute", chapt. 2).

[55]) Sauvaget, "Épitaphes", p. 421.

[56]) Lange, "Chute", chapt. 2 (in press).

[57]) Lange, "Rois de Gao-Sané", p. 264; *id.*, "From Mande", p. 281.

If we examine the list of the Dia with greater care, we notice that Kosso-Dārē, the first king of Gao-Sané, was preceded by Kosso-Muslim, who is stated to have been the first Muslim king of the Dia. It is certainly very strange that a line of kings bearing names which correspond to the Prophet Muḥammad and the first two Califs should be preceded by another Muslim king. Indeed, Muḥammad must have been the first Muslim of the Dia, if the names derived from Islamic history make any sense. The most plausible explanation for this contradiction would seem to be that Kosso-Muslim and Kosso-Dārē were one and the same king. The first name, then, refers to Kosso's rule somewhere else and the second to his reign in Gao.[58]) Unfortunately this hypothesis cannot be directly verified through the other evidence, since Kosso and his successor's name, Hizka-Zunku-Dam, were epithets. Kosso's personal name was most likely – as has been seen – K.mā. However, if we consider the Zāghē of Gao-Sané to be displaced kings or refugees, as their precarious establishment in Gao's twin town, the trading town of Gao-Sané, suggests, then it would be reasonable to suppose that Kosso-Muslim was the first Muslim king of the original kingdom over which he had ruled. In Gao, however, he was "Kosso the Great", because here he was preceded by a line of earlier Muslim kings.[59])

Next, our search for a tie-in between the written and the oral evidence leads us to the legend of Wagadu. Some valuable versions have the name Mamadu in the penultimate and Kumma in the ultimate position of the Sisse kings[60]), but the most reliable version has Mamadu as the last Sisse king and omits Kumma.[61]) Other versions place the name Kaya-Magha in the last position.[62]) These may be discarded, because we know that Kaya-Magha was the title of all Sisse kings and not that of an individual king.[63]) Once we eliminate the Kaya-Magha title from those lists, they too name either Kumma or Mamadu as the

---

[58]) Lange, "Chute", chapt. 4 (in press).

[59]) According to al Muhallabi and to al-Bakri (*Corpus*, pp. 87, 174).

[60]) Adam, "Légendes", pp. 92–3; Lancrenac in Dieterlen and Sylla, *Empire*, pp. 205, 207.

[61]) Monteil, "Légende", p. 379.

[62]) Arnaud in Dieterlen and Sylla, *Empire*, p. 218; Delafosse, "Légendes", p. 207.

[63]) TF, 75; M. Delafosse, "Le Gâna et le Mali et l'emplacement de leurs capitales", in *Bulletin du Comité d'Études Historiques et Scientifiques de l'AOF*, 7 (1924), p. 487.

last Sisse king. According to the original legend of Wagadu, it would appear that the last Sisse king was called either Kumma or Mamadu; indeed, perhaps he was known by both names. This conclusion parallels our analysis of the Gao material. It is further supported by the Zarma tradition of origin.

In the Zarma tradition, we find Mali-Bero (Mali the Great) or Sombo, as the hero who leads the exodus of the patriarchs flying with the base of a granary (*daba*) from Mali to Zarmaganda.[64]) The same hero is called Mali-Kaman-Dugusa in some versions, but more often, the latter is thought to have been a patriarch who lived just prior to the dispersal of the people in Zarmaganda.[65]) In both cases, Mali refers to Tendirma, situated in the lake region of the Niger. This is the region that we have identified as the historical centre of the Ghana kingdom.[66]) Kaman can be taken as a form of Kumma or K.mā and Dugusa would appear to derive from Wagadu(gu), the country (*dugu*) of the Wage (noble clans). Although the patriarch is in this case not called Muḥammad, we find the same doubling of the name already observed in the epitaphs of Gao-Sane, the tradition of Wagadu and the list of the Dia. Further it should be noted that the most authoritative version of the legend of Wagadu calls the last Sisse king by the nickname Soki-Mira (the one who plaits) which seems to echo the image of the plaited base of the *daba*, that represents the Zarma exodus from Ghana.[67])

In the tradition of the Diawara, the legendary figures bear similar names. The name of the first patriarch, Daman-Gille (Daman the great), echoes that of Kaman (Dugusa) of the Zarma, and hence, that of Kema. *Gille* is the Soninke equivalent of the Malinke/Bambara qualifier *-ba* (great). This name formation therefore parallels that of Sombo (Kem-ba) and, as we will see later, Kum-bi (Kem-ba). Daman-Gille was an outsider who came to a place that was under the authority of the king Mana-Maghan. If we omit the title Maghan, it would appear that Mana was identical with (Tunkā) Manīn, the pagan king of Ghana

[64]) Y. Urvoy, *Histoire de Populations du Soudan Central* (Paris, 1936), pp. 57–8; Mounkaila, *Mythe*, pp. 166–7.

[65]) Boube Gado thinks that Mali-Kaman-Dugusa is identical with Mali Bero (*Le Zarmataray: Contribution à l'histoire de populations d'entre Niger et Dallol-Mawri* [Niamey, 1980], pp. 14, 323).

[66]) Lange, "Altes Mali", pp. 611–2.

[67]) Monteil, "Légende", pp. 373, 379. The *daba* is thought to have been made of plaited grass (Mounkaila, *Mythe*, pp. 75, 99, 119–121, 133, 153).

mentioned by al-Bakrī. When the patriarch died he was replaced by his son Fie or Faran (king) Mamadu.[68]) Hence the legend of the Diawara repeats the sequence of an earlier Daman (= Kema) and a later Mamadu (= Muḥammad) as do the other traditions.

On account of these parallelisms it can hardly be doubted that Kema/Muḥammad was the Muslim king of the Sisse who ruled at the time of the Almoravids. The wide distribution of the name can be explained by the flight of Kema-Magha from Ghana to Gao.[69]) It is paralleled by the spread of the Dia-title. In the time of al-Bakrī, the title was held by the ruler of Tendirma (Ghana), and not yet by the ruler of Malal (Gao).[70]) In the second half of the thirteenth century there is epigraphic evidence in Gao-Sané for the title Dia.[71]) As these kings were the descendants of the Zāghē[72]), it seems very likely that the spread of the title was associated with the coming of the Zāghē. Kema-Magha is also remembered in Diara, to the west of Ghana, probably because some of the great ruler's descendants are established there.[73]) A connection between the Diara kings and the Sisse is further suggested by the Dia-title that we can find in Dia-ra, the name of the town[74]), Diawara, the name of the royal clan, and the royal epithet Tunka-ra, which became the patronym of the successive Diawara kings after their rise to power.[75]) All three names are further distinguished by the suffix *-ra*, also found in similar contexts elsewhere.

Apparently Kema-Magha's name also survives in the modern designation of the trading town Kumbi Saleh. Indeed, Kumbi seems to derive from the personal name Kema, to which the Mande qualifier *-bi* (great) has been added, just as the names Dia-be Sisse and Som-bo de-

[68]) Adam, "Légendes", pp. 238–9; Delafosse, *Haut-Sénégal*, vol. 1, pp. 273–4; Boyer, *Peuple*, p. 25.

[69]) Lange, "Chute", chapt. 6 (in press).

[70]) See *Corpus*, p. 82 and above p. 325.

[71]) J. O. Hunwick, *Sharī'a in Songhay. The Replies of al-Maghīlī to the Questions of Askia al-Hājj Muḥammad* (Oxford, 1985), p. 10.

[72]) Lange, "Rois de Gao Sane", p. 267.

[73]) The Diawara consider that the grave of Daman Gille is situated southwest of Diara in Bambaguédé (Boyer, *Peuple*, p. 22). Perhaps this is in fact the grave of a descendant of Kema Magha. Similarly the grave of *Mai* Idris b. 'Alī of Borno (1677–1696) in Fezzan is known as the grave of *Mai* 'Alī (D. Lange, *Le dīwān des sultans du Kānem–Bornū* [Wiesbaden, 1977], pp. 81 n. 59, 1).

[74]) Diara may therefore be supposed to stand for Wagadu and Ghana (rd *infra* p. 334).

[75]) Boyer, *Peuple*, p. 28.

rive from Dia and Kema respectively. The second name, Saleh, corresponds to the Arabic adjective *sālih* (good, righteous, virtuous), denoting the qualities of a pious Muslim ruler, especially those of a convert. This etymology can perhaps be taken as evidence for Kema-Magha's prolonged residence in Kumbi Saleh.

On the basis of an unknown source of information, al-Zuhrī claims in the middle of the twelfth century that the people of Ghana sought the help of the Almoravids against the town of Tadmekka seven years after the coming of Islam.[76]) The friendly relations between Ghana and the Almoravids after the coming of Islam are certainly noteworthy.[77]) They support the idea that Kema-Magha acceded to the throne with the help of the Almoravid leader Abū Bakr b. ʿUmar. If, indeed, the first Muslim king of Ghana owed his installation as king of Ghana to some kind of intervention or pressure brought to bear on the kingdom of the Soninke by the Saharan nomads, then one would have to expect that the powerful overlord would grant him further support against other pagan enemies.

3. The overthrow of Tunka-Manīn by Kema-Magha: 1076

Having identified the last Sisse king with a particular Muslim ruler mentioned in various sources, we must now try to find out from the contemporary evidence how this king came to power. Was he a Muslim before his accession to the throne, or did he convert to Islam after his installation as a king? If a Muslim prince supported by the Almoravids seized power, it has to be expected that the adoption of Islam as the official religion of Ghana was associated with large-scale social upheaval and considerable violence.

It has been suggested that Qena-Mara b. Basī, the vassal king of Alūkan mentioned by al-Bakrī, who concealed his Islamic faith, later became the successor of Tunka-Manīn.[78]) The name of his father, Basī, leads us to suppose that Qena-Mara was a son of king Basī of Ghana, who died in 1063. On account of his filial relationship with Basī, the vassal king of Alūkan may have earlier been an heir apparent. Perhaps the former king and the great officials removed him from his office be-

[76]) *Corpus*, p. 99.

[77]) For Conrad and Fisher this information provides one of the main arguments against the conquest theory "Conquest, I", pp. 26–7).

[78]) *Corpus*, p. 83.

cause they wanted to avoid the kingship of a prince converted to Islam.[79]) However, in the absence of any further evidence this idea remains purely speculative.

According to al-Zuhrī, who wrote in 1154, the people of Ghana became Muslims in the days of the Lamṭūna. The Andalusian geographer provides the exact date of 1076 for this event, linking the rise of Islam in Ghana to the activities of a man called Yahyā b. Abī Bakr.[80]) Although this person is said to have belonged to the Massūfa, the context of the statement suggests that the geographer intended to designate the great leader of the Saharan Berbers, whose involvement into the affairs of Ghana can hardly be denied.[81]) Therefore it may be tentatively suggested that the date given corresponds to the rise to power of Kema-Magha with the help of Abū Bakr b. ʿUmar. The similarity of the names Qena-Mara and Kema-Magha lends support to the idea that the last Sisse king was the vassal king of Alūkan during the rule of Tunka-Manīn.[82])

Oral traditions offer yet another approach to the question of Kema-Magha's rise to power. We have seen that one of the most important episodes of the legend of Wagadu deals with the killing of the snake by a young man called Mamadi. It may be asked whether this incident reflects the same historical event that is associated with the rise of Islam in the external sources. Or more precisely: is it possible to identify the snake-killer with the first Muslim king of Ghana and the snake itself with the last pagan king?

Different versions of the legend of Wagadu relate the killing of the snake or the collapse of the kingdom to the reign of a particular king: one connects it with the last pre-Islamic Sisse king[83]), another with the last Sisse king[84]), and yet another with the Ture.[85]) These at-

[79]) Levtzion, "Royal succession", pp. 92–3.

[80]) *Corpus*, p. 99.

[81]) The form of the name could have been influenced by the fact that Abū Bakr was succeeded by the descendants of his elder brother Yahyā (H. T. Norris, "Sanhāja scholars of Timbuctoo", in *Bulletin of the SOAS*, 30, 3 (1967), pp. 634–5). The date however must refer to the rise of Kema-Magha in the days of Abū Bakr, because Abū Bakr b. ʿUmar died only in 1087.

[82]) If Qena-Mara was identical with Kema-Magha, Magha cannot possibly have been a royal title. Perhaps it was the *dyamu* (patronym) of the Sisse.

[83]) Laurezac in Dieterlen and Sylla, *Empire*, p. 207, n. 1 (killing of the snake).

[84]) Adam, "Légendes", p. 93 (killing of the snake).

[85]) Monteil, "Légende", p. 373 (collapse of Wagadu).

tempts to date the key-episode of the story would seem to indicate the historical character of the legend. Several versions identify the snake-killer as a noble of Wagadu[86]); one considers him to have been the son of a foreign marabout and a local princess.[87]) Indirect evidence pointing to the identity of the person who committed the sacrilegious act is provided by the name Mamadi/u, applied to both the snake-killer and to the last Sisse king. We may suppose that Mamadi, the young hero, and Mamadu, the king, were originally one and the same person, because the derivation of more than one legendary figure from a historical person is apparent from the names Kema and Mamadu, both of which designate the last Sisse king. However, the main argument for the identification of the snake-killer with Kema-Magha is provided by the flight of the hero to Mema, which may correspond to the flight of the king to Gao.[88]) A supplementary argument may be derived from the king's nickname Soki-Mira (the one who plaits), seen above, which seems to reflect the Zarma legend according to which the patriarchs used the plaited base of a granary for their flight. The notion of the flight being associated with Mamadi the snake-killer and Mamadu the king, both figures apparently derive from a common prototype.

The Muslim version of the Wagadu legend, centered on Kema-Magha, is supplemented by a pagan version of the same legend whose focus is on Tunka-Manīn. The Niare of Bamako, who claim descent of Mana-Magha, a ruler of Wagadu, relate that the snake-killer was Fata-Magha, the twin-brother of Mana-Magha. Before it can be shown that Mana-Magha was indeed identical with Tunka-Manin however, we must note some relevant elements of Niare history.[89]) The Niare claim to have stayed in Diara after the dislocation of Wagadu. There we find a comparable Muslim tradition. The Niare themselves consider their proper name to derive from Niakate, a name which in Diara history designates the pre-Diawara dynasty. As for the killing of the snake, they believe that Fata-Magha, the twin-brother of Mana-Magha, com-

[86]) Monteil, "Légende", p.379; C.Meillassoux, L.Doucouré and D.Simaga, *Légende de la dispersion des Kusa (épopée Soninké)* (Dakar, 1967), p.188.

[87]) Adam, "Légendes", p.92.

[88]) Conrad and Fisher noted that the theme of the flight was of great importance for the legend ("Conquest, II", p.58).

[89]) V.Paques, "L'estrade royale des Niaré", in *Bulletin de l'IFAN*, XV (1953), pp.1644-5. The text has Fatamaha (as opposed to Manamagha). I suppose that this is a printing mistake for Fatamagha.

mitted the sacrilegious act. In Diara history we can find both the name Mana-Magha, given to the king of the Niakate, and the name Fata-Magha, given to Daman-Gille's lieutenant, the holder of the sword of kingship.[90]) Since Daman-Gille is identical with Kema-Magha, it can hardly be doubted that Mana-Magha was al-Bakrī's Tunka-Manīn, since Tunka must have been the title and Manīn, in the oral tradition rendered as Mana, the proper name. According to the second and more direct tie-in between the oral evidence and the written sources therefore, Tunka-Manīn's brother killed the snake of the Wagadu legend.

Going one step further, we may even postulate that the name Tane (-Fankante), which in the legend precedes Kumina and Mamadu, actually stands for (Tunka-) Manīn, the last pagan king of Wagadu. In that case, the last pagan king of Ghana would appear to have prided himself on being a descendant of Kante (if *fan* can be understood as a nasalized form of *fa* – father, ancestor).[91]) It should also be noted that Tane-Fankante doubles Tane just as Mamadu doubles Kumma. The Soninke tradition therefore transmits information only about the founder of the kingdom and its last two rulers.

The Diara tradition depicts the rise to power of Kema-Magha in terms which reflect history more directly than the legend of Wagadu. The tradition distinguishes between Daman-Gille (great Daman), the first patriarch, and his son Fie-Mamadu, the first *de facto* ruler of the Diawara. Fie-Mamadu is said to have been exiled because he deliberately injured the king's son in a fight. This incident may perhaps be interpreted as a contraction and inversion of two events, the attack against the royal family and subsequent exile far from the capital.[92]) After his father's death, Fie-Mamadu returned, eliminated the king, and ascended the throne himself. It is difficult not to see in this an account of Tunka Manīn's violent death at the hands of the Muslim prince Kema.

Another detail of the Diawara tradition seems to echo an historical incident. At the beginning of his reign, Fie-Mamadu received a rich present from the Berbers of Tagant that included a beautiful slave girl. He declined to marry her and offered her instead to his lieutenant Fato Makhan. In exchange he received the sword of kingship from the

[90]) Delafosse, *Haut-Sénégal*, vol II, pp.154-5; Boyer, *Peuls*, pp.24-7.

[91]) I owe some valuable linguistic comments concerning Mande languages to my colleague Bougouttie Coulibaly.

[92]) *Corpus*, p.83.

latter.[93]) Considering that the Niare version of the Wagadu legend calls the snake-killer Fata-Magha, we may suppose that the Diawara separated the positive figure Daman-Gille from the negative figure Fata-Magha; at the same time they recognize that the kingship was originally obtained by Fata-Magha. In other words, Fata-Magha was the king-killer who paved the way for the glorious Daman-Gille.[94]) The conclusion that the snake-killer respresents Kema-Magha, and the snake of Wagadu none other than the last pagan king Tunka-Manīn, is hardly escapable.

An isolated version of the Wagadu legend told in the Zarma village of Simiri in the form of the liturgy of a rain ceremony provides further support for these identifications.[95]) In this case, the hero Mali-Bero (Kema-Magha) is associated with the sacrifice of the girl, the role of the snake-killer being given to his brother Mali-Kayna (small Mali). Again, the villain must flee in order to escape the wrath of the people.[96]) The close family relationship between the priest Mali-Bero and the snake-killer Mali-Kayna suggests that the two legendary figures derive from an historical person who perpetrated an act of great and disturbing violence.

The Zarma tradition of origin gives a more detailed account of the same event. It explains the flight from Mali (Ghana) through the conflict between two groups of boys, the Zarma and the Fulbe (and Tuareg). Both groups used to bath in a small lake. After bathing, the Fulbe dried themselves with the clothes of the Zarma. When Sombo (Mali-Bero), the great Zarma prince, learned about this injustice, he decided to attack the Fulbe. He killed the prince of the Fulbe, so he and his companions had to flee. Although Sombo is said to have been the son of the great Zaberkan (Diabe), he belongs to the group of the oppressed Zarma. He not only attacked the oppressors, but in all the full versions of the legend, killed their leader, the prince.[97]) Disregarding

[93]) Adam, "Légendes", pp.238–243; Delafosse, *Haut-Sénégal*, vol.1, pp.273–6, 155–7; Boyer, *Peuple*, pp.25–7.

[94]) Earlier Daman-Gille has been dated either to the middle of the thirteenth century (Delafosse, *Haut Sénégal*, vol.1, p.271; Boyer, *Peuple*, p.24) or to the fifteenth century (M.Diawara, *La graine de la parole* [Stuttgart, 1990], p.23).

[95]) Simiri is situated on the road from Niamey to Ouallam (Gado, *Zarmatarey*, p.7).

[96]) *Ibid.*, pp.140, 154.

[97]) Mounkaila, *Mythe*, pp.75, 97, 117, 131–3.

the artificial ethnic opposition between the Zarma and the Fulbe/Tuareg, we conclude that the legend merges Kema-Magha's accession to the throne with his flight from the capital to a marginal province of his kingdom. Although the legend does not acknowledge a family relationship between Sombo and his victim, it is very likely that the Fulbe prince was his predecessor. Furthermore, these two antagonistic groups are depicted as children. This representation may perhaps be interpreted as an indirect allusion to the overwhelming fighting force of the nomads, which overshadowed the dynastic and religious conflict within Ghana. However, it is not clear whether the Zarma tradition refers to the rise of Kema-Magha or to his fall.

Other elements seem to indicate a direct involvement of the Ṣanhāja in the overthrow of Tunka-Manīn. As we have seen, al-Zuhrī associates the Islamization of Ghana in vague terms with the activities of Abū Bakr b. ʿUmar. According to the Diawara tradition, the Berbers of Tagant sent Fie-Mamadu (Kema-Magha) a caravan with many presents, including a beautiful wife who was given to Fato-Makhan (Fata-Magha-Kema Magha).[98]) It is possible that this wife was a daughter of Abū Bakr b. ʿUmar and that the relations between Kema Magha and his Ṣanhāja overlord were perceived very negatively. This would explain why the Diawara tradition presents the marriage with the Berber wife as a great threat whose consequences could only be avoided by giving her to Fato-Maghan, rather than to Fie-Mamadu.

In addition an isolated tradition connects the Saharan Berbers with the Islamization of Wagadu. A Moorish army planned to attack Kumbi, but when it became clear that the people were already Muslims, they only sent an imam, who became the ancestor of the Kumma clan.[99]) Other references to Moorish aggressors imply interventions of a more violent nature. But they probably deal with the expulsion of Kema Magha, not with the overthrow of Tunka Manin.

It has been shown that the legend of Wagadu couches the account of the downfall of Ghana in the framework of the dragon tale. Other traditions, free from this cliche, translate the historical event into a more straightforward story tinged with magic. In all cases the clash between the Muslim forces and the partisans of divine kingship is pre-

[98]) Adam isolates this wife from the three hundred captives of the gift ("Légendes", p.242) while Delafosse and Boyer single her out only on account of her beauty (*Haut Sénégal* II, 156; *Peuple*, 27).

[99]) Arnaud, "Islam", p.157, s.a. Conrad and Fisher, "Conquest II", p.62.

sented in such a way that the deep antagonism between the two par ties is no longer recognizable. The role of the Berber nomads is ever less apparent; however, the two straightforward versions of the story still carry some evidence of a Berber intervention. Only a very dramatic event in the history of Ghana with far-reaching consequences, could possibly have engendered traditions which are still alive among different ethnic groups nine hundred years later.

4. The Lamṭūna conquest of Ghana and the fall of Kema-Magha: 1087

Until now, it was generally supposed that the Berber conquest of Ghana was a result of the Almoravid expansion, and was motivated by the intention to force Islam on the pagan people south of the Sahara.[100]) In fact, it would seem that the Saharan nomads conquered the great kingdom of the Middle Niger only after the death of the Almoravid leader Abū Bakr b. ʿUmar in 1087. By that time, Islam had already widely spread among the people of Ghana as a result of the rise to power of a Muslim prince of the Sisse.

Writing towards the end of the fourteenth century, Ibn Khaldūn claims that the Islamization of Ghana was a consequence of Berber domination.[101]) Many authors have related this statement to al-Zuhrī's remark that Ghana was Islamized in 1076[102]), convinced that the Almoravids had conquered Ghana and imposed Islam by force. As we have seen however, the date of 1076 corresponds to the overthrow of Tunka-Manīn and the subsequent accession to the throne of the Muslim prince Kema-Magha. Moreover, it has gone unnoticed that Ibn Khaldūn did not consider the Almoravids, but the veiled Berbers *(al-mulaththamūn)* to have been the conquerors of Ghana. We shall see that this idea corresponds more closely to the historical facts.

Historians have also overlooked a key-element of the legend of Wagadu that supports the idea of a Ṣanhāja conquest of Ghana. According to the legend, the Sisse were followed by a new family, Douassi, the eldest son of this family, is said to have been the founder of the Berber tribe of Douaïch, a tribe more commonly known as Idaw

[100]) Delafosse, *Haut-Sénégal*, vol. II, p. 54; S. Trimingham, *A History of Islam in West Africa* (London, 1962), pp. 29–30; J. Cuoq, *Histoire de l'islamisation de l'Afrique de l'Ouest* (Paris, 1984), p. 41.

[101]) *Corpus*, p. 333.

[102]) *Ibid.*, p. 99.

ʿĪsh.[103]) Since the Idaw ʿĪsh claim themselves to be descendants of Abū Bakr b. ʿUmar and the Lamṭūna chiefs[104]), the information in the legend can at this point shown to be valid. On the basis of the evidence provided by Ibn Khaldūn and the Soninke tradition, we may therefore suppose that the fall of the Sisse was precipitated by a Lamṭūna conquest of Ghana.

How can the occurrence of the name Douassi be interpreted in terms of the dynastic history of Ghana/Wagadu? In all likelihood, the isolated name stands for a Lamṭūna chief who helped to eliminate the former Sisse kings. In contrast to the ancestors of the Sisse and the Ture, Douassi is not said to have been the father of other rulers of Wagadu. Therefore it would appear that the Lamṭūna conquest of Ghana did not result in the foundation of a Berber dynasty. It is more likely that the name Douassi represents a tribal chief who was for some time the *de facto* ruler of Ghana, after having driven Kema-Magha from power. The Soninke tradition would certainly not have kept traces of the Lamṭūna chief if he had not played an outstanding and somewhat positive role in the history of Wagadu.

Other local traditions reveal further aspects of the same event. According to the *Taʾrīkh al-Fattāsh*, the collapse of the old dynasty of the Kaya-Magha was marked by widespread internal disturbances: the lowly and despised subjects are said to have risen against the nobles and to have assaulted them, cutting open the bellies of the noble women in order to kill their unborn children.[105]) Although this description of the events may be exaggerated, it gives evidence for a tremendous social upheaval that resulted in the fall of the Sisse. In another instance, the same chronicle associates the event with civil war *(fitna)*.[106]) A different tradition attributes the ruin of the great dynasty of Wagadu more directly to a vast plot staged by the Ture and other clans against the rule of the Sisse.[107]) Although these local traditions

[103]) Adam, "Légendes", pp. 92–3; Lanctreau, "Légende", in Dieterlen and Sylla, *Empire*, pp. 205–207; Delafosse, *Haut Sénégal*, vol. I, p. 258, id., "Traditions", p. 207; Monteil, "Légende", p. 373 & s.; Arnaud, "Singulière légende", in Dieterlen and Sylla, *Empire*, p. 212.

[104]) P. Amilhat, "Petite chronique des Id ou Aich, herriers guerriers des Almoravides sahariens", *Revue des études islamiques*, 1 (1937), pp. 46, 50, 107; H. Norris, *Saharan Myth and Saga* (Oxford, 1972), pp. 114–5.

[105]) *TF*, p. 42 & 77.

[106]) *TF*, pp. 30 & 71.

[107]) Dieterlen and Sylla, *Empire*, pp. 123–4.

do not mention any foreign aggressor, it can hardly be doubted that we are confronted here with the fall of the Sisse dynasty, in consequence of the Lamṭūna conquest.

Other oral traditions also keep traces of a Berber involvement in the fall of the Sisse. According to the Zarma legend of origin, the great patriarch Sombo (Kema-Magha) had to flee from Mali (Ghana) because of the Tuareg and Fulbe retaliation he expected after he had killed their children.[108]) Although the role of the Fulbe in these events is not clear, the reference to the Tuareg would seem to represent the presently unknown Ṣanhāja.

Furthermore, we dispose of a legend which refers to the arrival of "veiled people" at Walata. The Soninke did not comply with their demand for water, and refused them access to their wells. Therefore the foreigners used a magic device that made the water of the wells change into blood. As a consequence, the people had to leave the town.[109]) Walata being situated in the neighbourhood of Kumbi Saleh and Tendirma, the reference could in this case be to the capital of Ghana, which the Sisse had to leave under the pressure of the Lamṭūna.

Arab geographers also report on the situation in Ghana after the fall of the Sisse. According to al-Zuhrī, Ghana became the capital of the Almoravids.[110]) Although it is unlikely that the Lamṭūna chief himself moved into the seat of the Sisse kings, he must have played an important role in the history of the Soninke kingdom; otherwise neither al-Zuhrī, nor the Soninke tradition would have retained traces of a Ṣanhāja presence in the centre of Ghana. Al-Idrīsī in turn mentions the ʿAlid rulers of Ghana, whose capital was situated on the banks of the Niger.[111])

Even the fall of the Sisse dynasty did not entirely escape the attention of the Arab authors. According to al-Zuhrī, the pagan ruling clan of Ghana was called Barbara.[112]) It had lost its power by his time.[113]) Ibn Khaldūn knew the ruling clan under the name of Soso; he even noted that the Soso rulers had adopted Islam in the "days of the conquest" (*ayyām al-fatḥ*).[114]) Since the Soso were the ruling class of Gha-

[108]) Mounkaïla, *Mythe*, pp. 166–7.
[109]) Arnaud, *Islam*, pp. 157–8; s. a. Conrad and Fisher, "Conquest, II", p. 61.
[110]) *Corpus*, p. 99.
[111]) *See next chapter.*
[112]) *Corpus*, p. 99.
[113]) Lange, "Altes Mali", pp. 593–7, 619.
[114]) *Corpus*, pp. 322, 333.

na, it is very likely that they were identical with the Sisse.[115]) The reference to the Islamization of Ghana in connection with a Ṣanhāja conquest would therefore seem to have confused the accession of the Muslim prince Kema-Magha in 1076 with the Lamṭūna conquest of Ghana which took place later. Further on, the historian claims that the Soso conquered Ghana at a time when the authority of the (new) rulers of Ghana had dwindled away.[116]) From this latter remark it appears that Ibn Khaldūn failed to mention that at one stage the Soso/Sisse had been ousted from power. In spite of Ibn Khaldūn's omission of the expulsion of the Sisse, almost certainly due to the merging of two different events into one by the oral tradition, this latter event must have corresponded to a major upheaval in the history of the Western Sūdān.[117]) If the Arab authors refer only indirectly to the fall of the Sisse, this may be explained by the fact that they were interested in the tribes of the Western Sūdān and in the growth of Islam, but not in the dynastic history of Ghana.

When did the Lamṭūna conquest take place? If it led to the destitution of Kema-Magha, it must necessarily have taken place after 1076, the date given by al-Zuhrī for the Islamization of Ghana, which corresponds to the rise to power of the first Muslim king. On the other hand, it must have occurred before 1100, when the deposed king died in Gao. Relating these dates to the dynastic history of Ghana, we come to the conclusion that Kema-Magha was probably the ruler of Ghana as long as Abū Bakr b. ʿUmar was at the head of the southern Almoravid empire. In all likelihood, he was ousted from power shortly after the death of the great Almoravid leader in 1087, when the great Ṣanhāja confederation of the south fell to pieces.

According to Saharan traditions, Abū Bakr b. ʿUmar was succeeded by his son Muḥammad, whose brief rule was followed by that of his nephew Khiḍr b. Yūsuf.[118]) This discontinuity within the Lamṭūna leadership must have encouraged centrifugal forces. Faced with a widespread revolt, the Lamṭūna would appear to have turned their forces against Ghana, where they defeated Kema-Magha, forcing him to seek refuge in the distant vassal kingdom of Gao. Apparently they did not follow up their victory by trying to conquer the eastern marches of Ghana.

[115]) Lange, "Altes Mali", p. 594.
[116]) *Corpus*, p. 333.
[117]) Lange, "Chute", chap. 5.
[118]) Norris, "Ṣanhāja scholars", pp. 634–5.

In spite of his defeat by the Lamṭūna the refugee king was well received by the Massūfa in Gao. This apparent contradiction between the Lamṭūna conquest of Ghana and the Massūfa protection of the Sisse king in Gao may be explained by the new situation created by the death of Abū Bakr b. ʿUmar. As a consequence of his death the Berber tribes of the Sahara were no longer held together by a common oath of fealty towards the Lamṭūna leader. While the new leader of the Lamṭūna tried to force the other Ṣanhāja tribes and the Sudanic kingdoms back into the Almoravid alliance, both the fugitive king of Ghana and the chief of the Massūfa were apparently convinced that their allegiance towards the Lamṭūna was restricted to Abū Bakr b. ʿUmar. Once their overlord was dead, they felt no obligations toward his successor. The new Lamṭūna leader's attempt to enforce continued loyalty would appear to have formed the basis for the temporary alliance between the Sisse and the Massūfa reflected by the stelae of Gao-Sané.

On account of these elements, it may be suggested that the Lamṭūna conquest was not an onslaught of nomadic tribes against a united front of Soninke defenders, but an interference motivated by the attempt to reestablish a former vassal relationship. When Kema-Magha tried to liberate his country from the Lamṭūna suzerainty by refusing to renew his oath of fealty towards the successor of Abū Bakr b. ʿUmar, he had apparently not foreseen the possibility that the Muslim opposition against Sisse rule would side with the Berbers. Defeated and unable to resist the coalition formed by his internal and external enemies, he sought refuge in one of his vassal kingdoms.

From this reconstruction of events, it would appear that the rebellion staged by the Muslim party did not precede the external aggression, but accompanied and followed the nomad attack. Moreover, the violence that forced the Sisse out of their capital was apparently carried out by Soninke followers of the Muslim opposition against Sisse rule, not by the foreign conquerors. Hence the name Duafise does not stand as a synonym for foreign intervention and brutal repression in the Soninke tradition, but rather as a reminder for the high-mindedness of nomadic rule after a period of social upheavals.

5. The Ture dynasty

The direct domination of the sedentary people of Ghana by the Lamṭūna cannot have lasted for long. It seems to have gone side by side with the emergence of a new dynasty patronized by the nomads. Later, when the Lamṭūna had lost their religious fervor and political

drive, the local rulers progressively asserted their independence with respect to their nomadic overlords. But the central kingdom of Ghana was at that time confined to Tendirma and the adjacent regions including Kumbi Saleh; Diara in the west and Gao in the east were under the sway of the Sisse.

There is only one contemporary author who informs us about the new dynasty of Ghana: al-Idrīsī. In the middle of the twelfth century he notes that the king lived in a palace on the Nile which was built in 1116.[119]) This date marks perhaps a local event, but it is also possible that it corresponds to the shifting of the capital from Kumbi Saleh to Tendirma. According to al-Idrīsī, the king of Ghana claimed descent from ʿAbī b. Abī Ṭālib and had the Friday prayers pronounced in his own name, although he paid allegiance to the Abbasid Caliph.[120]) Contrary to al-Zuhrī, who writes at the same time, the geographer has nothing to say about the southern wing of the Almoravids.

It has been shown above that the legend of Wagadu adequately distinguishes between the Sisse and the post-Sisse rulers of Ghana. The former were the sons of Kantana-Boro and the latter those of Singa-Gille, the fourth and fifth wives of Dinga. The eldest son of Singa-Gille was Douassi, the presumed ancestor of the Idaw ʿĪsh. He was followed by Mandyan-Ture and his son Ture-Khankhedyaba, from whom the Ture clans are said to have originated.[121]) In fact, the present Ture clans of the Middle Niger call their ancestor by the name Magandyou, which is certainly a corruption of Manga Mandyan.[122]) After the Ture came Fassiro who gave birth to the clan of the Kumma.[123]) Although the tradition itself does not provide any explanation for the mixed offspring of the last wife of Dinga, it may be suggested that this sub-family brings together the post-Sisse dynasties by combining the overlapping rule of nomads and sedentary people.

Some authors have speculated that the ʿAlids mentioned by al-Idrīsī were themselves of Berber origin.[124]) Several arguments can be

---

[119]) *Corpus*, pp. 109-110.

[120]) *Ibid.*, p. 109.

[121]) Monteil, "Légende", p. 373; other versions have only the name Mamadi for the Ture (Adam, "Légendes", p. 85; Delafosse, *Haut Sénégal*, vol. II, p. 258).

[122]) V. Person, "Les ancêtres des Samori", in *Cahiers d'Etudes Africaines*, 13 (1963), p. 141.

[123]) Adam, "Légendes", p. 85; Lanercrac in Dieterlen and Sylla, *Empire*, p. 205; Delafosse, *Haut Sénégal*, vol. I, p. 258; Monteil, "Légende", p. 373.

[124]) Cooley, *Negroland*, p. 66; J. Marquart, *Die Benin-Sammlung des Reichs-*

brought up against this theory. First, if the ʿAlids were of Lamṭūna origin, they would probably have prided themselves on their genealogy as descendants of the great Almoravid leaders. Second, according to the Wagadu legend Douassi is followed by Mandyan-Ture, whose descendants cannot be confounded with those of Douassi. Third, if the combined rule of the Lamṭūna and the ʿAlīds extended from 1087 to 1116 and the largely independent rule of the ʿAlids from 1116 to the mid-twelfth century (al-Idrīsī), then there is hardly any room for yet another dynasty until the Sisse reconquest of Ghana, during the second half of the twelfth century. The Fassiro and the Kumma clan of the Soninke must have ruled later. For these reasons, it can hardly be doubted that the kings of Ghana who claimed descent from ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib were the Ture.

Any consideration about the social origins of the Ture must primarily be based on the account of the pre-Islamic situation in Ghana given by al-Bakrī.[125]) Most of the great court officials and the Wangara traders were already Muslims at this period. The Andalusian geographer does not specify whether the Muslims of the court were black Africans or foreigners, but judging from the large size of the traders' town of Ghana, many foreigners must have been established in Ghana for some length of time. Since few if any of them had brought their own wives with them on their tiresome journey across the Sahara, intermarriage must have been widespread. It may be assumed that most of the children of these unions were brought up according to the religion of their fathers. Although from the point of view of custom and language, the Mulattos may have been more akin to their mothers, they certainly also took pride in the genealogy of their fathers. Hence the son of an Arab father and a Sisse princess could be at the same time identified as an ʿAlid and as a person related to the former dynasty of Ghana. Opposition against the Sisse and their concept of divine kingship may easily have arisen among the Muslim officials of the court who were well acquainted with the wider world. Perhaps we may find a vague reference to the rising class of the Muslim Mulattos in the Zarma tradition, which distinguishes between the Fulbe and the Tuareg among the enemies of the patriarch Sombo.[126]) The former may possibly correspond to the Mulattos, and the latter, to the Lamṭūna.

---

museums für Völkerkunde in Leiden (Leiden, 1913), p. 184; Trimingham, *History*, p. 56, n. 1.

[125]) *Corpus*, pp. 79–84.

[126]) Mounkaila, *Mythe*, pp. 69–147.

The new dynasty to which al-Idrīsī referred most likely had its origin in the milieu of the Muslim court officials mentioned by al-Bakrī. A similar situation with respect to a nomad overlord who delegated the tasks of daily administration to a local official prevailed in Timbuktu during the fifteenth century. In 1433 the Tuareg chief Ākillu had conquered the rich trading town of the Middle Niger. He charged the Ṣanhāja governor Muḥammad-n-Adda with the administration of the town, while he himself continued to live as a nomad of the desert. This governor had held the same position earlier, under the rule of Mali. Al-Saʿdi refers to him as a Ṣanhaja, but in fact, Muhammad-n-Adda was a descendant from a local official on his mother's side. When Sonni ʿAlī conquered the town in 1468, he appointed a son of the former governor of Timbuktu to the same office[127]), while Askia Muhammad later resorted to another son.[128]) In spite of the fact that the Adda family could never assert itself as an independent dynasty, we may assume that the rise to power of the post-Sisse rulers of Ghana took place under similar auspices.

Useful insights can also be derived from the meaning given in later times to the name Ture. The name is widespread in West Africa, and often connotes a white origin. It was first mentioned by Ibn Baṭṭūṭa in the fourteenth century, in reference to the white traders of Sokolo, who were Muslims of the Mālikī school (just like the Almoravids).[129]) The chroniclers of Timbuktu applied the same name to Askia Muḥammad, who seized power in Songhay in 1493.[130]) Later, it became the praise-name of the Arma, who were the descendants of the Moroccans who had conquered Songhay in 1591.[131]) It should also be noted that in Hausa the name is still commonly applied to Europeans and Arabs (not to Tuaregs).[132])

On the basis of the foregoing comparisons, it may be suggested that the legend of Wagadu merged two distinct dynasties that ruled side by side for some time in some form of a dual kingship: the Lamṭūna and the Ture.[133]) Behind these dynastic labels, it is possible to discern two social groups united only by their common Islamic faith: on the

---

[127]) *TS*, pp. 22–4, tr. 38–42.

[128]) *TS*, pp. 72, tr. 118.

[129]) *Corpus*, p. 287.

[130]) *TS*, pp. 71, tr. 117. *TF*, pp. 30, tr. 114 (he came from Toro).

[131]) J. Rouch, *Les Songhay* (Paris, 1954), p. 4.

[132]) R. C. Abraham, *Dictionary of the Hausa Language* (London, 1962), p. 90.

[133]) In the version of Arnaud Dialsse has a son called Mohammed (in Dje

one hand, a tribe of Berber nomads who had imposed their domination on the people of Ghana, and on the other, a class of Muslim Mulattos for whom the Lamṭūna were the liberators from pagan oppression and obscurantism. At first, the rule of the Lamṭūna must have been fairly direct, their local representatives, the Ture, having only limited authority. The king of the new dynastic line asserted himself as ruler in his own right by building his sumptuous palace in 1116. From then on, the authority of the Lamṭūna was reduced to some form of nominal suzerainety. By the mid-twelfth century, any bonds between the Lamṭūna and the new rulers of Ghana had been cut. Instead, the Ture recognized the prestigious but ineffective authority of the distant Abbasids.

Another aspect of the policy pursued by the new dynasty is revealed by the contrast between the ʿAlid genealogy of the Ture and the Islamic throne-names adopted by the Sisse.[134]) It would appear that Kema-Magha, the Sisse king who fled to Gao, chose to call himself by the name Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad, as attested by the epitaphs of Gao-Sané, only after his defeat in Ghana. This can be deduced from the two names by which he is known in the king list of the Dia, Kosso-Muslim and Kosso-Dārē, and from the two names Mamadu and Kema, which refer to him in the legend of Wagadu. These names do not distinguish between an earlier pagan and a later Islamic phase in the life of the king, as one might have thought, but between his status as king of Ghana and as a refugee king established in Gao. The Ture, on the other hand, may be supposed to have claimed descent from ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib right from the time of their humble origins as appointees of the Lamṭūna, because they must have attempted to compensate for the absence of an hereditary claim to rule through a prestigious Islamic pedigree.

Looking at the events which took place in Ghana during the Almoravid period from a wider perspective, we may conclude that the major conflict which tore the Ghana kingdom apart and finally precipitated its downfall resulted from the opposition between a party of radical Muslims, spearheaded by Mulattos, and the more conservative royal clan of the Sisse. By 1087, the recent conversion of the inner circle of the Sisse to Islam had already put great strains on the unity of the kingdom. Obviously the radical Muslims wanted to exploit the favorable situation created by the Almoravid threat and promote further reforms of the institutions of divine kingship. Therefore, when Ghana was attacked by the Lamṭūna, this assault came like a flame which set ablaze a highly explosive preexisting antagonism. The elimination of the Sisse from their ruling position put a stop to the internal confrontations. From their bases outside the central region of the reduced kingdom however, the defeated members of the former royal clan were eager to prepare for their revenge.

terlen and Sylla, *Empire*, p. 212). This may perhaps be interpreted as evidence for a Lamṭūna dynasty.

[134]) Lange, "Chute", chapt. 6.

Conclusion

The preceding considerations show that it would be a distortion of the evidence to see in the downfall of Ghana simply the consequence of a Ṣanhāja military conquest. Certainly the dislocation of Ghana was not brought about by a single and sudden eruption of foreign forces comparable to the Moroccan conquest of Songhay in 1591. Instead we have to distinguish between a number of successive events whose cumulative effect resulted in the disintegration of the greatest and oldest kingdom in West Africa. These events differ considerably from each other with respect to their scope and the reliability of their reconstruction.

First, there was the conversion of Kema-Magha, presumably the former crown prince, to Islam. It must have taken place sometime before 1068, the year when al-Bakrī was writing. The conversion should be seen in the context of the Islamic fervour stimulated by the Almoravids among the Berber nomads whence militant Islam spread to the black Africans.

Second, in 1063 the pagan prince Manīn acceded to the throne because the great officials of the state had apparently preferred him to Kema-Magha. It would appear that this choice was dictated by the attempt to protect the divine kingship of Ghana against the growing tide of conversions which swept over the Soninke in consequence of the Almoravid mouvement.

Third, in 1076 Kema-Magha overthrew Tunka-Manīn, the last of the divine kings of Ghana. Owing his success largely to an intervention of the Almoravids in his favour, the Muslim usurper was probably obliged to recognize the overlordship of Abū Bakr b. ʿUmar.

Fourth, the death of Abū Bakr b. ʿUmar in 1087 appears to have set in motion a new series of events. Apparently the king of Ghana and a number of Ṣanhāja leaders, in particular the Massūfa of Gao, re-

fused to renew their pledge of fealty towards the new leader of the Lamṭūna. In consequence the successor of Abū Bakr b. ʿUmar would seem to have ressorted to force in order to impose his authority. Attacked by the Lamṭūna and confronted by an unexpected internal uprising of the Muslim opposition, the king of Ghana Kema-Magha left the capital and fled to the eastern province of his realm.

Fifth, the Lamṭūna did not give up their nomadic way of life even after the conquest of Ghana. For the practical needs of government, the new masters of the country seem to have relied on a lieutenant recruited from among the Muslim court officials. This protegee of the Lamṭūna would appear to have founded the Ture dynasty. By the mid-twelfth century the new dynasty had become fully independent from the former nomad suzerains of Ghana.

Sixth, towards the end of the second half of the twelfth century the Sisse reconquered the kingdom. This event may have corresponded to a pagan reaction against Islam, because the governor of Sijilmāsa made it clear in a letter that the king of Ghana differed from him with respect to his religion.[135])

After the defeat of the military leader Sumanguru Kante, who had fought on behalf of the Sisse[136]), the Muslim party won the upper hand again, when the Keïta extended the range of their power to Tendirma and Gao, following Sundiata's victory.[137]) Although geographically based on a region further upstream of the Niger, the kingdom of Mali was a Muslim successor state of Ghana.

Not all of these events were equally disastrous for the stability of the great Soninke kingdom, some may have resulted in temporary recovery, others in the ephemeral resuscitation of the old institutions. But the general development, beginning with the accession of a pagan chance-candidate and ending with the Keïta take-over was one of deep decline.

Taking a broader perspective, we should distinguish between three factors which contributed to produce the dislocation of the

[135]) *Corpus*, pp.372, 433 n.9; N. Levtzion, "Ancient Ghana: a reassessment of some Arabic sources", in *Mélanges en hommage à Raymond Mauny* (Paris, 1981), vol.1, p.436.

[136]) Sumanguru does not figure among the sons of Dinga's last wife. One version of the Wagadu legend claims that he was the descendant of Dinga's female cook (Monteil, *Légende*, p.370 n.5). These and other elements suggest that he did not belong to the royal Sisse. From his name – Soso Sumanguru Kante – it may be deduced that he was a Soninke from Soso/Ghana.

[137]) Sundiata was apparently like Kema-Magha a convert (*Corpus*, p.295).

great kingdom: the penetration of Islam in West Africa, the rise of a class of islamized Mulattos in Ghana and the expansion of the Almoravids.

The influence of Islam was felt in the Sudan from the end of the seventh century through the trans-Saharan trade. North African traders lived in close contact with their local associates and initiated them into the new religion. Therefore it is not surprising that by the time of al-Bakrī the Wangara were already Muslims. The conversion of kings was more difficult and had more profound repercussions on the society. Prior to the Almoravids, only the minor kings of Gao and of Takrūr had given up their ancestral religion. Even though at the court of the powerful ruler of Ghana the majority of the court officials were Muslims, the ancestral gods were still worshiped with fervour by the nobles and the common people. The king himself was considered to be the reincarnation of the highest god and his priests were the most important dignitaries of the state. It must have been clear to the great priests that the conversion of the divine king would destroy the central institutions of the kingship of Ghana. They therefore appear to have removed the converted prince Kema-Magha from the succession to the throne by appointing him as a provincial governor.

Another result of the increasing influence of Islam on Ghana was the rise of a Mulatto class. This section or class of the society had been steadily growing since the earliest time of the trans-Saharan trade. Being of mixed parentage, the Mulattos' commitment to Islam cannot be doubted. However, they also had access to the highest positions in the state, because they were not considered foreigners. Supported by the Wangara traders, they were the driving force of the internal opposition against the rule of the Sisse. The Lamṭūna relied primarily on this class in order to assert their authority. One of them, perhaps the son of a Sisse princess, who must have been well-acquainted with the administration of the kingdom, became the founder of the Ture dynasty. Although he himself, or his successor, was recognized as king in his own right, he was no longer a divine king. Deprived of their spiritual leaders, the mass of the people began to abandon the old cults and to turn to Islam.

Many historians were inclined to think that the strong resistance to Islam could only have been overcome by a straightforward military conquest.[138]) However, strictly speaking, this was not what happened.

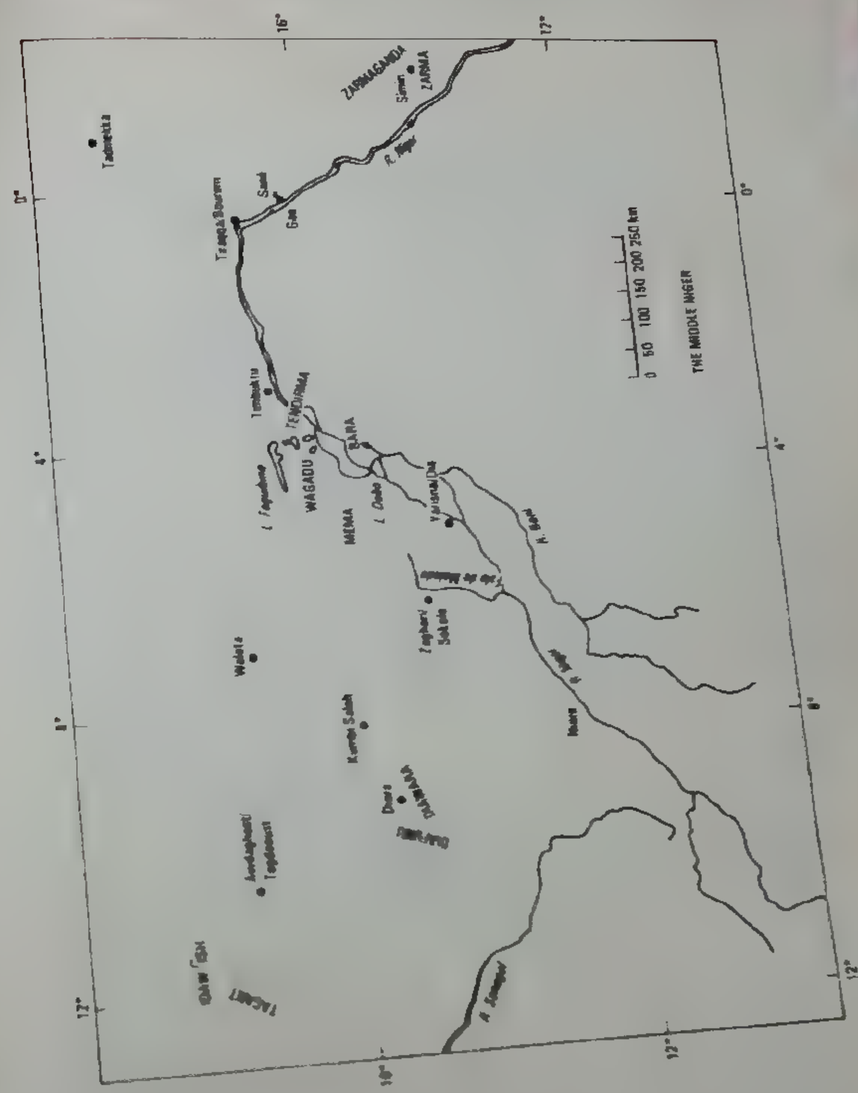
[138]) Delafosse, *Haut-Sénégal*, vol.II, p.54; Trimingham, *History*, p.30; Levtzion, *Ancient Ghana*, p.188.

In a first move, the Almoravids only seem to have supported the former heir apparent in his bid for the throne. For a number of years they were content with a pledge of loyalty that probably involved a heavy annual tribute. Various elements show that the Lamṭūna interfered bluntly and massively in Ghana only when Kema-Magha had withdrawn from the confederation of the southern Almoravids after the death of Abū Bakr b. ʿUmar. Indeed, the death of the great Lamṭūna leader seems to have precipitated the dislocation of the southern wing of the Almoravids[139]), since the Godāla and Massūfa as well as the Sisse of Ghana defected from the Lamṭūna-led alliance. The ensuing conquest of Ghana, which was supported by the rise of the Muslim opposition, must therefore be attributed to the attempt of the new Lamṭūna leader to force the Sisse to accept his authority. Therefore it would seem that the Lamṭūna conquest of Ghana was dictated by purely political motives. It had religious implications only insofar that its success was to a large extend due to the simultaneous uprise of the radical Muslims of Ghana who were anti-Sisse.

Hence it is clear that neither the Islamization of Ghana, nor the dislocation of the kingdom resulted from the onslaught of the Ṣanhāja. The decline and final disappearance of Ghana were rather the result of the collapse of the foundamental institutions of divine kingship. This institutional disintegration was set in motion by the Muslim king of the Sisse and it was accelerated by the Ture kings. In spite of some external interference is was basically an internal process resulting from the growing influence of Islam.

However, the downfall of Ghana did not mean that the past experience of statehood was lost to the people of the Middle Niger. After different attempts to adapt the old institutions of divine kingship to the requirements of Islam and to the new, more secular spirit of the time, which all more or less failed, the Keïta finally established a fully Islamic empire also based on the Niger, but having its capital further upstream. Under its sway, the people of the Western Sudan entered into closer contact with the outside world than ever before.

[139]) Delafosse, *Haut-Sénégal*, vol. II, p. 56.



FROM GHANA MALI TO SONGHAY: THE MANDE FACTOR IN GAO HISTORY*

Situated on the Niger bend, the "Songhay" kingdom is one of the oldest polities in West Africa and yet its history is one of the most obscure. At the very north of the Sahelian belt, its capital Gao lay in an ideal position with respect to the trans-Saharan trade route passing through the plains of Tanezruft to North Africa. In terms of the agricultural resources of the *bilād al-sūdān* Gao was less ideally located, since the present northern limit for rainfall agriculture is about two hundred kilometres to the south.[1] The agricultural potential of the narrow Niger flood plains, hardly sufficient for the riverine fishermen and herdsmen, could not support the large surplus population of urban settlement. Hence only the Saharan and trans-Saharan trade explains the existence of a town like Gao.[2] For these and other reasons, historians believe that Gao could not have been the first capital of an early "Songhay" kingdom that was based on surplus agricultural production. Kukiya, which was situated very close to the region of permanent rainfall agriculture and to the Songhay heartlands, seemed a more likely site for such early political developments.[3]

* The important volume of Paulo de Moraes Farias, *Inscriptions*, appeared too late to be fully taken into consideration for this chapter. It differs from the present approach insofar as it relies more specifically on the inscriptions and on a number of hypotheses derived from them. Nevertheless, on key issues of Middle Niger history such as the identification of the medieval kings of Gao and the determination of the first capital of the Gao state, de Moraes Farias comes to similar conclusions as the present author (*ibid.*, §§ 381-403, 437-443). Other findings of considerable historical relevance concern the legendary nature of 'Ali Kolon and the interpretation of the queens of the epitaphs in the light of the Sudanic "official queen-mothers" (*idem*, §§ 173-191; 415-421).

[1] The northern limit of rainfall agriculture in this region corresponds to the northern limit of Songhay settlement beyond the river plains (see map in: Rouch, *Songhay*, 102).

[2] This argument basically remains valid even if we consider that the 400 mm isohyet, which delimits the northern extension of rainfall agriculture, might have shifted during the wet period of 700 to 1100 AD from the latitude of Kukiya to about the latitude of Gao (Brooks, *Landlords*, 10).

[3] Delafosse, *Haut-Sénégal*, I, 192; Rouch, *Contribution*, 167-172; Fage, *History*, 77; Cuoq, *Histoire*, 134; Hunwick, *Shari'a*, 4-5; id., *Timbuktu*, XXXIII-XXXIV. For a critical review of Hunwick, *Timbuktu*, see Lange, "Not yet Songhay" (in press).

However, neither a review of external sources nor a critical analysis of internal evidence supports the view that the rise of Kukiya preceded that of Gao. The earliest Arab geographers including al-Khuwārizmī and al-Yaʿqūbī mention Gao by its Berber name Kawkaw.[4] Regular trade relations between the Ibāḍī kingdom of Tāhert and Gao existed as early as the beginning of the ninth century.[5] In the second half of the ninth century, "the kingdom of Gao was the greatest of the realms of the Sudan, the most important and the most powerful".[6] From the archaeological evidence recovered so far, however, it appears that large-scale exchanges with North Africa began only in the tenth century.[7] The most likely explanation for the absence of North African trade goods from the archaeological record lies with the prevalence of Saharan salt among the imports from the north during the early period of the trans-Saharan trade.

It is well-known that Gao was a great *entrepôt* of the Saharan salt trade. According to al-Muhallabī, "the king's treasure houses are spacious, his treasures consisting principally of salt".[8] The king's stock of salt probably resulted from taxes levied on salt loads upon the entry and departure of caravans from the kingdom.[9] Al-Bakrī mentions that salt served as currency in the region of Gao. North African traders loaded it in Taghāza and other mines in the Sahara and brought it south by camel.[10] Tuareg caravans may have been – as in our days – specialized in the transport of salt independent from the trans-Saharan trade.[11] Control of the Saharan salt trade seems to have been the single most important economic factor in the rise of the great kingdoms of the Sahelian belt. During the pre-Islamic period, the regional salt trade was probably not associated with any regular caravan trade bridging the entire desert. During the eight and ninth centuries North African traders might have mainly imported salt which they bought at desert

[4] Levtzion/Hopkins, *Corpus*, 7, 21. Al-Khuwārizmī wrote *Ṣūrat al-arḍ* between 813 and 842 AD and al-Yaʿqūbī wrote *K. al-taʾrīkh* in 873 AD (Levtzion/Hopkins, *Corpus*, 5, 19). In Tamasheq, the town is still called Gawgaw (Georg Klute, oral information), not Gaugu (Trimingham, *History*, 84 n. 2).

[5] Ibn al-Saghīr, *Chronique*, and al-Wisyāni, *K. al-Siyar*, in: Levtzion/Hopkins, *Corpus*, 24-25, 90. For further references to Gao in North African records, see Insoll, *Islam, Archaeology*, 60-61.

[6] Al-Yaʿqūbī *in:* Levtzion/Hopkins, *Corpus*, 21.

[7] Insoll, *Islam, Archaeology*, 62-76; *id.*, "Iron Age Gao", 13-22..

[8] Al-Muhallabi and al-Bakri *in:* Levtzion/Hopkins, *Corpus*, 174, 87.

[9] For Ghana, see al-Bakri *in:* Levtzion/Hopkins, *Corpus*, 81.

[10] Ibn Battūta *in:* Levtzion/Hopkins, *Corpus*, 282; Leo Africanus, *Description*, II, 465. For the salt-gold exchange, see Levtzion, *Ancient Ghana*, 9-10, 22, 115; Devisse, "Routes de commerce", 52-54, 56, 59.

[11] For the salt trade of the desert edge, see Mauny, *Tableau*, 328-336; Hopkins, *Economic History*, 47-48.

mines. The medieval trans-Saharan trade pattern involving the importation of goods produced in the north, appears to have developed only from the tenth century onwards. Goods from North Africa offered for barter on the Sahelian markets then included cloth, horses, weapons, glazed pottery, glass, beads, metal and metalwork.[12]

From the written records it is not clear what products North African traders acquired in Gao. Barth suggests that Dyula traders brought the gold of Kong which corresponded to the yields from the gold fields of Pura and Lobi to Gao.[13] Gold dust from these areas reached the north either by way of Jenne or Gao. More recently, old gold pits have been discovered close to the Sirba valley, 350 km south of Gao.[14] Slaves from Gao, as from other Sahelian kingdoms, were another important commodity valued by North African traders.[15] They had to march on foot through the Sahara. A point of departure as far north as possible reduced the high casualties of the long, dreadful march. Also, positioning the king's residence close to the caravan track leading from the relevant salt mine would also enable the ruling group to control and tax the transport of the salt to the south more easily.

It is often assumed that the trans-Saharan trade developed only after the Arab conquest of North Africa.[16] In fact, the salt trade certainly flourished independently of the integration of North Africa into the Arab-Islamic empire. Some gold and limited numbers of slaves reached North Africa in the pre-Islamic period.[17] The bias of Arabic sources, the lack of substantial written sources from the preceding period and the difficulty in interpreting the archaeological record should not distract from the fact that conditions of transport through the Sahara were radically improved by the introduction of the camel at the beginning of the Christian era. Once adopted by the Saharan tribes, the camel, being able to cross lengthy, waterless tracks, became the basis for regular trans-Saharan trading.[18] Although

[12] Levtzion, *Ancient Ghana*, 177-180; Insoll, *Islam, Archaeology*, 62-71.

[13] Barth, *Travels*, III, 645. Leo Africanus mentions large quantities of gold brought to Gao in the sixteenth century (*Description*, II, 471). About the gold fields of Pura and Lobi see Mauny, *Tableau*, 295-298, and Kiéthéga, *L'or*, 39-129.

[14] On the gold production on the middle Sirba, see Devisse, "L'or", 345, 356-357 (M. Regnoult/R. Vernet).

[15] For the sixteenth century, see Leo Africanus, *Description*, II, 471, and Ibn al-Mukhtār, *T. al-Fattāsh*, 104/tr. 193, and for the medieval West African slave trade, see Levtzion, *Ancient Ghana*, 174-178.

[16] Mauny, *Siècles obscurs*, 79, 138-143; Shaw, *Nigeria*, 93-95, 158-166.

[17] For gold, see Garrad, "Myth and metrology", 443-461, and for slaves Bovill, *Golden Trade*, 21-28. See also above pp. 277-287.

[18] Mauny, *Tableau*, 287-289; id., *Siècles obscurs*, 129-131; Bulliet, *Camel*, 111-140; Austen, *Economic History*, 33-34.

salt was apparently first transported by donkeys, its trade likewise benefited from the introduction of the camel.[19]

On the basis of these arguments, there is no need to locate the origins of the Gao kingdom closer to the main lands of the Songhay. In fact, as we shall see, a critical analysis of the Arabic sources shows that Gao was at the centre of political developments on the eastern Niger bend – although there are a number of diverging interpretations with respect to the available sources. Furthermore, the Songhay factor could not have been of great significance in the early history of the Gao kingdom since Arab authors did not mention the name Songhay before the end of the fifteenth century.[20] Instead, a number of testimonies suggest that Mande people, coming from the west, extended their influence on the Gao kingdom prior to the emergence of the Songhay in the east.[21] This question of ethnicity is closely connected to the dynastic history of Gao and hence to the ethnic identity of the three successive ruling houses: the Zā, the Sonni and the Askiya. Ten years ago, the ethnic composition of the Gao kingdom was the subject of debate between John Hunwick and myself.[22] More recent research will hopefully bring the issues involved into better focus.

1. The Zā/Zāghē of Gao-Saney and the Almoravids

The ongoing re-evaluation of Songhay history is mainly based on the twelfth century epitaphs of Gao-Saney. Discovered just before the Second World War, they were unknown to Maurice Delafosse and they were left aside by the less philologically-minded Jean Rouch.[23] Owing to a lack of convincing evidence from these epitaphs, most historians, including John Hunwick, still follow the writings of Delafosse and Rouch on major points of ancient Gao history.[24] The reason for the neglect of the epitaphs is simple: until recently, none of the royal names provided by them could be satisfactorily equated with the rulers of available king lists and therefore their historical meanings remained obscure. My recent propositions on

[19] Without referring to camels, al-Bakrī mentions that in Ghana the salt was taxed on the basis of donkey-loads (Levtzion/Hopkins, *Corpus*, 81).

[20] Al-Maghīlī refers to the warlike Saghay who fought against the different sultans of Saghay (*Asʾilat Askiyā* in: Hunwick, *Sharīʿa*, 14/tr. 70).

[21] Lange, "From Mande", 285-288; *id.*, "Chute", 167-173.

[22] Hunwick, "Gao revisited", 251-273; Lange, "From Mande", 275-301.

[23] Delafosse, *Haut-Sénégal*, II, 60-72; Rouch, *Contribution*, 251.

[24] Trimingham, *History*, 83-87; Fage, *History*, 76-77; Levtzion, "Sahara and Sudan", 677-679; Cuoq, *Histoire*, 134; Hunwick, *Timbuktu*, XXV, XXXIII-XXXVI.

the epitaphs have only been partly taken into consideration in the recent literature concerned with the history of the Niger bend.[25]

In order to understand the difficulties involved in interpreting the royal epitaphs of Gao-Saney, we have to briefly consider the main features of these texts. Their outstanding documentary importance for the history of the Middle Niger derives from the fact that they provide the names of three successive rulers belonging to the Almoravid period. However, since most of the names mentioned in the epitaphs are Arabic cover names, it is difficult to establish direct correlations with African names from the local sources. Several scholars supposed that the rulers of Gao-Saney, being qualified as *malik* "king", were the Zā but in the absence of any correspondence with the royal lists of Songhay this remained unsubstantiated.[26] Other authors adopted the opposing position that the kings mentioned belonged to a different dynasty.[27] The next question concerns their ethnic identity: were they Berbers or black Africans and if the latter is correct, were they Songhay or Soninke?[28]

Yet, the epitaphs of Gao-Saney contain several African names deserving special attention. Mainly three royal epitaphs are relevant with respect to the problem of identification. These commemorate three kings: Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muhammad b. ʿAbd Allāh who died in 494 AH/1100 AD, Abū Bakr b. Abī Quhāfa who died in 503 AH/1110 AD and ʿUmar b. al-Khattāb who died in 514 AH/1120 AD.[29] The first and third epitaph mention in the third position after the two Arabic names quite out of context the African name Zāghī or Zāghay (the spelling Zāghē

[25] Lange, "Rois de Gao-Sané", 264-269; *id.*, "From Mande", 276-281; Insoll, "Iron Age Gao", 25-26; Hunwick, *Timbuktu*, XXXII-XXXVI; de Moraes Farias, *Inscriptions*, §§ 381-414.

[26] Sauvaget, "Épitaphes royales", 429; Trimingham, *History*, 90 n. 1; Cuoq, *Histoire*, 136. Hunwick and de Moraes Farias correctly argue that the dynasty traditionally called Zā should in fact be called Zuwā (*Timbuktu*, 5 n. 49, 332; *Inscriptions*, XXIII, §§ 422-423). However, for the sake of clarity the present essay continues to refer to the first dynasty of the Timbuktu chronicles and the second dynasty of Gao as the Zā. Indeed, in spite of the identity of the Zāghē kings of the stelae with the Zā of the chronicles, the identity of the Zuwā of the stelae remains obscure: Were they a dynasty, a ruling group or a clan? (Cf. Lange, "Rois de Gao-Sané", 264-269; de Moraes Farias, *Inscriptions*, §§ 422-423).

[27] Hunwick, "Gao revisited", 429-430; *id.*, *Timbuktu*, XXXV-XXXVI; de Moraes Farias, *Inscriptions*, §§ 99, 401-403.

[28] For a Berber identity: Hunwick, "Gao revisited", 429-430; Lange, "Rois de Gao-Sané", 266-267; Insoll, "Iron Age Gao", 25-26; Hunwick, *Timbuktu*, XXXV. For a Soninke origin: Lange, "Chute", 169-173; *id.*, "Almoravid expansion", 327-332.

[29] Sauvaget, "Épitaphes royales", 419-435; de Moraes Farias, *Inscriptions*, 3-8, 15-16 (n° 1, 4, 13a).

corresponding to a middle position).[30] However, it should be noted that the name occurs again on the royal epitaph of Fandā b. Arbanī b. Zāghī who died in 1203 AD.[31] In view of the chronological depth of at least one century between the first two and the latter inscription there can be no doubt that we are dealing here with an important ancestral figure. In the absence of any other common name, Zāghē can be taken as the dynastic name of the kings attested by the epitaphs and for the intermediate rulers for whom there are no epigraphic testimonies. There are five arguments in favour of an identity between the Zāghē and the Zā.

The first argument concerns the ancestor of both series of royal names. Leaving apart the Islamically inspired reference to Yemen, the *T. al-Sūdān* begins with Zakay and *T. al-Fattāsh* with Oua'aï.[32] These forms may be compared with Zāghay or Zāghī (Zāghē) of the Gao-Saney inscriptions. As de Moraes Farias insightfully argues, these names, provided by two different categories of sources, seem to correspond to attempts to transcribe the name of one and the same apical ancestor who was not a local ruler.[33]

A second argument concerns the similarity of a double name. Indeed, in his epitaph the third ruler of Gao-Saney is, besides his Arabic name, also designated by an African name referring to himself and to his father. Unfortunately, the African name was misread by the editor of the royal epitaphs as Māmā b. K.mā.[34] On the basis of a photograph of the epitaph it was later established that the personal name of the ruler should not be read Māmā but either Bāmā, Tāmā, Lāmā, Nāmā or Yāmā. These variations are explained by the absence of diacritical points in the Kufic script of the epitaphs. Taking the name Nmī which refers to a queen who died 550 AH/1155 AD as a paradigm, the editor chose Nāmā as the most likely vocalisation.[35] However, it is more appropriate to base the reading of the royal name on the male name of the Prince Yāmā Kūrī, who died in 663 AH/1265 AD.[36] Considering Yāmā b. K.mā to be the correct name of the third Zāghē king of Gao, this identifies him as the eighteenth king of the Zā called

[30] Ibn Khurradādhbih mentions south of Morocco the land of Zāghī b. Zāghī (Levtzion/Hopkins, *Corpus*, 17).

[31] De Moraes Farias, "Du nouveau", 520-521; id., *Inscriptions*, 24-25 (n° 23). The clearly written final *yā'* of Zāghī excludes an *imāla* and suggests the readings Zāghī and Zāghay (here shortened to Zāghē).

[32] Al-Sa'dī, *T. al-Sūdān*, 2/tr. 4; Ibn al-Mukhtār, *T. al-Fattāsh (Notice historique, NH)*, 332.

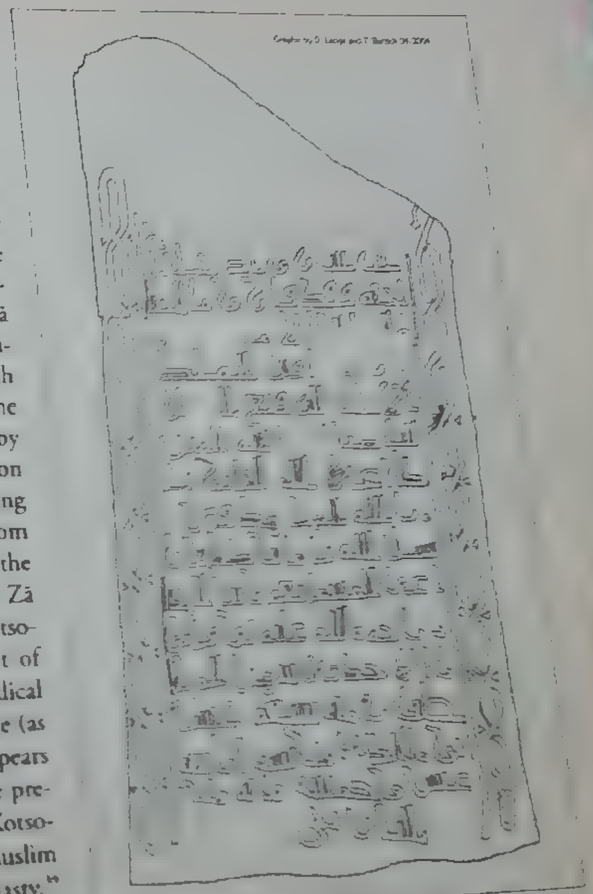
[33] De Moraes Farias, *Inscriptions*, §§ 434-435.

[34] Sauvaget, "Notes préliminaires", 7; id., "Épitaphes royales", 432-433.

[35] Viré, "Note sur trois epitaphes", 375. For the translations of the third epitaph see Sauvaget, "Épitaphes royales", 433.

[36] While Sauvaget hesitated between the reading Bāmā and Nāmā ("Épitaphes royales", 438), de Moraes Farias established that Yāmā was correct ("Du nouveau sur les stèles", 515-517).

Chart 16. Epitaph of the third ruler of Gao-Saney – Yāmā b. Kīmā b. Zāghē (503-514 AH; 1110-1120 AD)



Biyu-Kī-Kīma by the *T. al-Sūdān* and Yama-Kitsi by the *T. al-Fattāsh*.[37] Hence the name of the inscription should be read Yāmā b. Kīmā.[38] The identification of Yāmā b. Kīmā with the eighteenth ruler of the Zā is further supported by the chronological position of both figures. Counting back three reigns from Yama-Kitsi, we reach the sixteenth ruler of the Zā called Kusoy- or Kotso-Dārē who, on account of his name and a radical change of his residence (as we shall later see), appears to be the same as the preceding Kusoy- or Kotso-Muslim, the first Muslim king of the Zā dynasty.[39] According to the *T. al-Fattāsh*, the inhabitants of Gao adopted Islam between 471/1078-9 and 475/1082-3.[40] This chronological closeness between the first Zāghē and the first Muslim king of the Zā suggests

[37] Al-Sa'dī, *T. al-Sūdān*, 3/tr. 5; Ibn al-Mukhtār, *T. al-Fattāsh (NH)*, 332-333.

[38] Lange, "Rois de Gao-Sané", 264-269; id., "From Mande", 276-281. De Moraes Farias gives the different possible readings of the name K.mā (*Inscriptions*, 16).

[39] Lange, "Rois de Gao-Sané", 258-269. On the duplication of Kusoy/Kusoy-Dārē and Kotso-Muslim/Kotso-Dārē see Lange, "Chute", 162.

[40] Ibn al-Mukhtār, *T. al-Fattāsh (NH)*, 332-333.

that these two are identical. The reign of the first king of the Zāghē in Gao therefore lasted between 19 and 23 years.[41]

A third argument is based on the Arabic loan names of the epitaphs. As previous scholars observed, the names of the first three Zāghē kings of Gao-Saney correspond exactly to the names of the Prophet Muhammad and his two successors, the Califs 'Umar and Abū Bakr.[42] Kings of the desert edge who adopted the names of the Prophet and the first two Califs must have considered themselves to be the first Islamic rulers of Gao. This is precisely what the *Ta'rīkhs* assert with respect to the fifteenth king of the Zā, Kusoy or Kotso Muslim with the succeeding Kusoy-Dārē being – as we have seen - probably the same person. Although the Zāghē and the Zā pretended to have been preceded by pagan rulers, we know that both lines of rulers succeeded to Muslims.[43] Therefore the two lines of rulers share the important characteristic of distinguishing themselves on false grounds as Muslims from their pagan precedecessors.[44]

A fourth argument builds again on the identity of names. A Kufic epitaph of Gao-Saney commemorates the death of 'Ā'isha, daughter of King Kūrī, who died in 1117 AD. It has been suggested that King Kūrī is identical to Diata-Koré and Kū-Kuray, the last or the last but one pre-Islamic king of the Zā mentioned by the *T. al-Fattāsh* and the *T. al-Sūdān*.[45] If we consider that the first Islamic king of the Zā, the first or the second successor of Diata-Koré/Kū-Kuray, came to power between 1078/9 and 1082/3, it is not unlikely that his daughter died about 1117 AD and thus outlived her father by at least 37 years.

A final fifth argument has to do with the identity of a late thirteenth century king of Gao. Indeed, it would appear that the ruler Fandā b. Arbanī b. Zāghī of the epitaphs, who died in 1203 AD in Gao-Saney, is the same as the 22nd king of the Zā. The latter is called Fanda-Diaroa by the *T. al-Fattāsh* and Tīb by the *T. al-Sūdān*.[46] If we consider that the reign of Yāsiboy, the 27th king of the Zā, ended towards 1300 AD, it appears that from Hūnabonūa-Kodam/Abū Bakr to Fanda/

[41] Five earlier inscriptions for commoners discovered in Gao-Saney dated between 1042 and 1095 AD show that the Zāghē kings relied on an earlier local tradition of epitaphs (de Moraes Farias, *Inscriptions*, 31-37).

[42] Sauvaget, "Notes préliminaires", 6-7; *id.*, "Épitaphes royales", 434; Cuoq, *Histoire*, 135-136.

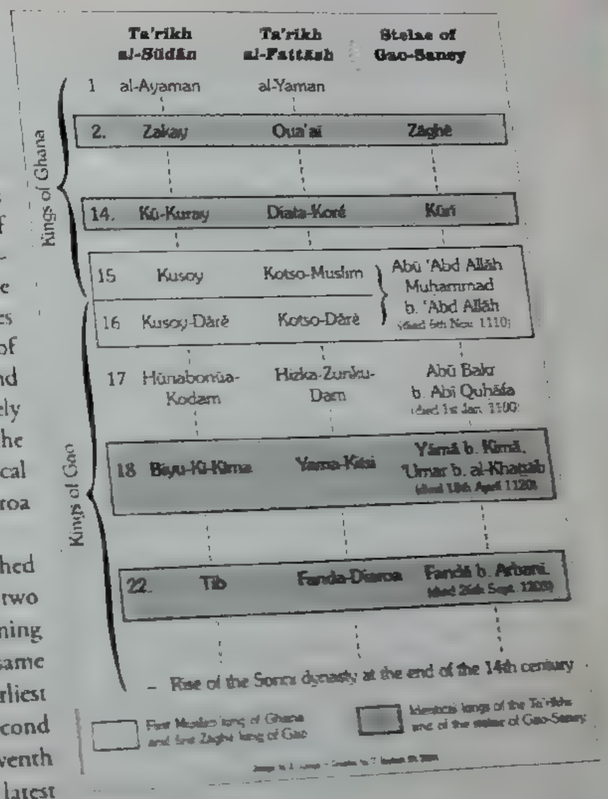
[43] Evidence provided by al-Muhallabī and al-Bakrī *in:* Levtzion/Hopkins, *Corpus*, 174, 87.

[44] While earlier historians considered the Zā to have been Berbers (Delafosse, *Haut-Sénégal*, I, 192; Rouch, *Contribution*, 169-179) it is now generally thought that they were Songhay (Fage, *History*, 80; Cuoq, *Histoire*, 134; Hunwick, *Sharī'a*, 5).

[45] Ibn al-Mukhtār, *T. al-Fattāsh* (NH), 332; al-Sa'dī, *T. al-Sūdān*, 3/tr. 5; Trimingham, *History*, 90 n. 1; Lange, "Rois de Gao-Sané", 262.

[46] Ibn al-Mukhtār, *T. al-Fattāsh (NH)*, 332-333; al-Sa'dī, *T. al-Sūdān*, 3/tr. 5.

Chart 17: Kings of the Zā/ Zāghē dynasty of Gao



Fandā six kings reigned for a period of 103 years, while from Fanda/Fandā to Yāsiboy five kings reigned for a period of 97 years. As the average of 17.2 years in the first period compares well with the average of 19.4 years in the second period, it is quite likely that the Fandā of the stelae is indeed identical with the Fanda-Diaroa of the list of the Zā.

Having established the identity of two sets of kings claiming descent from the same ancestor, the earliest belonging to the second half of the eleventh century and the latest to the beginning of the thirteenth century, it follows that these kings were members of one and the same dynasty. Clearly, the Zāghē were neither subordinate kinglets nor a short-lived dynasty.[47] Therefore, the identity of the Zāghē and the Zā should put a stop to all speculations about several dynasties ruling for a short period at the beginning of the twelfth century side by side in relative independence at Gao.[48] Inversely, it has to be admitted that the Zā at a specific time of their history had strong foreign connections.

[47] Sauvaget, "Épitaphes royales", 438; Hunwick, "Gao and Almoravids", 418, 430; Insoll, "Iron Age Gao", 25-26; Hunwick, *Timbuktu*, XXXV.

[48] De Moraes Farias thinks that the "Caliphal period" of Gao was characterized by a rotational system of rulership having resulted from a pact of different powerful groups of the area (*Inscriptions*, §§ 400)-403). His distinction between the earlier and the later *malikū* is in many aspects similar to my distinction between the Ghana and the Gao Zāghē (*ibid.*, §§ 422, 430).

Who were the kings of the desert edge who dared to take the highly prestigious names of the Prophet and his two successors? One conclusion to be derived from this presumptuousness is that the bearers of these names were not in direct and continuous contact with the Arab world. Indeed, spatial and cultural distance appear to have given the Zāghē kings the idea that they were accomplishing in their own ethnic milieu a task comparable to that of the Prophet and his two successors. The ideosyncracy of the naming seems to exclude the Zāghē from belonging to the widely travelled Saharan Berbers.[49] Furthermore, no minor kings south of the Sahara would have compared their own achievements to that of the great ancestral figures of Islam. Hence the highly prestigious Islamic loan names adopted by the first three Zāghē rulers imply that they must have been important and well-known kings who, in their own region, could compare their status to that of the Prophet Muḥammad and his two successors in the Mediterranean world. The Berbers were in close contact with the Arabs of North Africa and they did not have any tradition of ancient and famous rulers of their own. Therefore, the particularity of the names is more appropriately explained with respect to black Africans of the Sudan than with their Saharan neighbours.

What was the relationship between the Zā/Zāghē kings and the Almoravids? Since the first two royal stelae are of white marble and the Kufic writing of their epitaphs exhibits certain characteristics of Andalusian workmanship, it was suggested that they were produced in Almeria in Southern Spain and that the Almoravids were the connecting agents.[50] Moreover, the precise dates of the deaths of two kings and a queen, which must have been known prior to the actual fabrication of the stelae, bear witness of continuous and close relations between Southern Spain and the Middle Niger. The organizational structures necessary for the repeated sending of stelae through the Sahara would not only seem to imply excellent Berber communication across the Sahara but also a certain degree of political influence of the Berbers on the Gao kingdom.[51] On the other hand, the complex arrangements needed for the production and transportation of the stelae also show that the beneficiaries of these efforts were important rulers in their own right and not insignificant subjects of the Almoravids.[52] These and other consid-

[49] It should however be noted that some notables of Ghana visited Andalusia by a detour on their way to Mecca (Levtzion/Hopkins, *Corpus*, 98).

[50] Sauvaget, "Notes préliminaires", 5; *id.*, "Épitaphes royales", 421; Viré, "Note sur trois épitaphes", 368.

[51] Altogether Flight mentions seven different stelae in white marble. Three of them have exact dates including the day, the month and the year ranging from 1100 to 1110 ("Medieval cemetary", 105-106). See also de Moraes Farias, *Inscriptions*, 3-9 (n° 1-5).

[52] On the basis of the title *malik* given to the kings of Gao-Saney, Sauvaget supposed that the Zāghē were subordinate kinglets ("Épitaphes royales", 438).

erations imply that the Zāghē were highly renowned black African kings. Besides their boastful association with the most prestigious figures of Islam, the great attention bestowed on them by the Berbers indicates that they were members of a dynasty benefiting from considerable regional fame.

Were the Zā/Zāghē local kings of Gao? The information provided by Arab geographers clearly shows that prior to the Zāghē the rulers of the Gao kingdom were already Muslim. Al-Muhallabī in the tenth century mentions that the king of Gao "pretends to be a Muslim" and al-Bakrī writes towards 1068 that the kingship in Gao was only given to Muslims.[53] However, the Zā/Zāghē were eager to distinguish themselves from their pagan ancestors: the Zāghē kings' adoption of the names of the Prophet Muhammad – Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad b. 'Abd Allāh – and his two successors, was meant to mark the beginning of a new and Muslim era.[54] It is indeed difficult to imagine that Abū 'Abd Allāh Muhammad had Muslim predecessors of his own dynasty who ruled in Gao. Even more strikingly, the king lists of the *Ta'rikhs* brand the predecessors of the Muslim Zā as pagans who should be cursed by Allāh, for none had adopted Islam.[55] If they had been the ancestors of the Zāghē, the earlier Muslim kings of Gao would not have been so easily turned into despicable pagans. Therefore it is more appropriate to suggest that the testimonies pertaining to the Zāghē and the Zā refer in fact to a line of rulers who immigrated from somewhere else.[56] Indeed, al-Maghīlī, who stayed in Gao at the end of the fifteenth century, writes that both Sonni 'Alī and Askiya Muhammad pretended to descend from Muslim conquerors of the country, although they belonged to different dynasties.[57] This conquest apparently occurred during the Almoravid period and led to the Islamization of the Gao kingdom.[58] Earlier, during the period of the Qanda, the impact of Islam on the local people must have been very limited since al-Bakrī remarks that the subjects of the Muslim king of Gao continued to worship idols.[59] Therefore, it was not

[53] Levtzion/Hopkins, *Corpus*, 174, 87.

[54] Sauvaget was convinced that the Zāghē were neophytes ("Épitaphes royales", 428, 434). Similarly Trimingham (*History*, 90 n. 1) and Cuoq (*Histoire*, 134-136).

[55] Al-Sa'dī, *T. al-Sūdān*, Mtr. 5; Ibn al-Mukhtār, *T. al-Fattāsh* (NH), 332.

[56] Likewise Cuoq supposes that the Zāghē had after their arrival – from Kūkiyā – precipitated a revolution in Gao (*Histoire*, 134-136).

[57] Al-Maghīlī *in*: Hunwick, *Sharī'a*, 13, 171 tr. 69, 72.

[58] Chronological considerations have to be based on the number of 30 rulers said to have reigned between this conquest and Sonni Ali (*Sharī'a*, 13/tr. 69). This number corresponds precisely, as Hunwick observed, to the number of Zā and Sonni kings between the first Muslim king of the Zā, Kusoy, and Sonni 'Alī (*Sharī'a*, 69 n. 1).

[59] Levtzion/Hopkins, *Corpus*, 87.

only out of conceit that the descendants of the enigmatic conquerors claimed that their Muslim ancestors had imposed their authority over a pagan society.

Did the Muslim conquerors of the Almoravid period come from Kukiya? According to the *T. al-Sūdān*, the Zā originated in a place called Kukiya. It is here that the only Timbuktu chronicle available to Barth and Delafosse situates the foundation of the Zā dynasty: the foreign hero al-Ayaman is said to have been recognised as king after he had killed the demon-like fish whom the local population worshipped.[60] Since the chronicle does not mention any transfer of the dynasty from Kukiya to Gao, some early scholars thought that the name served as an alternative designation for the town usually called Kāghu/Gao.[61] Contrary to the localization of the Zā legend at Kukiya, the second Timbuktu chronicle, *T. al-Fattāsh*, clearly connects the foundation account of the Zā kingdom with the town of Gao. According to this more profane version, the Yemenite hero spoke a language different from that of the local people and was much taller. He is said to have become the ruler of the country because of his ability to protect the sedentary people against the nomads.[62] Independent from the question of Zā origins, various references in *T. al-Sūdān* and *T. al-Fattāsh* to Kukiya indicate that a locality of this name was situated about 150 km downstream of Gao close to the modern village of Bentia.[63] Lying closer to the Songhay mainlands, one might think that the town would have been more of a stronghold of traditional beliefs than Gao.[64] However, a number of funerary Arabic inscriptions show that Kukiya-Bentia was inhabited by a Muslim community perhaps from the beginning and certainly from the second half of the thirteenth century onwards.[65] Kukiya therefore did not remain a centre of traditional "Songhay" in spite of Islamizing tendencies spreading from Gao. It is quite unwarranted to see it as the cradle of the Zā dynasty.[66]

[60] Al-Sa'dī, *T. al-Sūdān*, 4/tr. 7-8; Barth, *Travels*, III, 657-660; Delafosse, *Haut-Sénégal*, I, 60-64.

[61] Houdas *in*: al-Sa'dī, *T. al-Sūdān*, tr. 6 n. 3; Delafosse, *Haut-Sénégal*, I, 192 n. 1.

[62] Ibn al-Mukhtār, *T. al-Fattāsh*, (NH), 330-331.

[63] Desplagnes, *Plateau*, 73-76. Considering that Kukiya derives from *gungu* "island", Delafosse suggests that the name could be applied to various localities (*Haut-Sénégal*, I, 192 n. 1).

[64] Rouch, *Contribution*, 167-172; Hunwick, *Sharī'a*, 5-6.

[65] De Moraes Farias, *Inscriptions*, n° 189, 190, 191, 192, 193, 194, 196, 198, 199, 200. An inscription from Egef-n-Tawaqqat, a site 7 km northwest of Kukiya-Bentia, is dated either 1182 or 1201 AD. See also de Gironcourt, *Missions*, 32-36, and Viré, "Stèles funéraires", 490-499. De Moraes Farias explicitly rejects the notion of "cultural authenticity" as applied to Kukiya (*Inscriptions*, 451).

[66] In spite of the information provided by *T. al-Fattāsh*, this is the case with Rouch, *Contribution*, 167-172, Trimingham, *History*, 84-85, Fage, *History*, 76-77, Cuoq, *Histoire*, 134, and Hunwick, *Sharī'a*, 5-7.

Where did the Zā come from? Since the evidence from the *Ta'rīkhs* is only concerned with founding events of Kukiya or Gao, we should turn our attention to present-day traditions of origin. Since the most obvious descendants of the Zā are the Zarma, we have to take into account their historical recollections.[67] It is well-known that the Zarma trace their origins back to the foundation heros Zabarkan and Mali Bero (the great Mali). The latter came from the country of Melle, or more precisely from the locality of Dirma/Tendirma in the west,[68] where he and a number of companions are said to have mounted a base of a granary by which the group miraculously flew to Sargan in Zarmaganda.[69] In some versions of the legend, the group made a stop-over in Gao.[70] In accordance with the Melle tradition of origin, which seems to refer rather to the Islamized kingdom of Ghana than to Mali properly speaking,[71] the traditionists insist that the Zarma are Mallance, "people of Melle/Mali".[72] Furthermore, there are a number of cultural traits, including the language of the bards and the dragon-killing motif, which attest strong connections with the Soninke.[73] Although the legendary tradition of a flying base of a granary seems curious, it would appear to refer to the shift of a number of people from the Lakes region of the Niger, i.e. ancient Ghana, to Gao in the Almoravid period.[74] Moreover, the stay of Mali Bero in Gao seems to correspond to the subsequent rule of the Zā/Zāghē, the ancestors of the Zarma. The later flight of the group to Sargan and their dispersal in Zarmaganda and other (later) Zarma countries most likely refers to the progressive takeover of the territorial administration of the Gao kingdom by the Zā/Zāghē and their officials from the previous Qanda ruling group.[75]

Which language did the early Zarma speak? At present the Zarma inhabit a region which extends from the Saharan fringes in the north to the dry valley of

[67] Gado, *Zarmatarey*, 127-134; Olivier de Sardan, *Concepts*, 400; Lange "Rois de Gao-Sané", 272, and *id.*, "From Mande", 285-286.

[68] Urvoy, *Histoire*, 58-59; Gado, *Zarmatarey*, 140-143; Olivier de Sardan, *Concepts*, 406; Mounkaila, *Mythe*, 183.

[69] Urvoy, *Histoire*, 59-61; Rouch, *Contribution*, 207-208; Hama, *Histoire*, 105-108; Olivier de Sardan, *Concepts*, 315, 406-412; Mounkaila, *Mythe*, 156-242.

[70] Ardant du Picq, *Population africaine*, 17-18; Urvoy, *Histoire*, 60.

[71] Gado, *Zarmatarey*, 122, 146, 154; Mounkaila, *Mythe*, 232, 234; Lange, "Altes Mali", 610-621.

[72] Gado, *Zarmatarey*, 129, 145; Olivier de Sardan, *Concepts*, 406; Mounkaila, *Mythe*, 180.

[73] Gado, *Zarmatarey*, 127-128, 145-154; Mounkaila, *Mythe*, 181-183.

[74] Similarly Mounkaila, *Mythe*, 187-188. In this context the designation ancient Ghana, perhaps chronologically less misleading, refers to the same region as old Mali (Lange, "From Mande", 285-288; *id.*, "Chute", 169-173.

[75] Cf. Lange, "Rois de Gao-Sané", 269-257; *id.*, "From Mande", 285-288; *id.*, "Chute".

Dallol Mawri in the east and to the Niger in the south. Although certain bards still recite the accounts of origin in Soninke, their spoken language is a dialect of Songhay.[76] In view of the linguistic situation characterized by the spread of Northern Songhay to the oasis of Tabelbala 1400 km north of Timbuktu and to Agadez 860 km east of Gao,[77] and of Southern Songhay to Hombori in the south, it seems that Songhay must have been spoken in the Niger valley and in the Zarma country, in Zarmaganda and Zarmatarey, since ancient times.[78] It may be noted in passing that the Northern Songhay speakers are composed of three sedentary groups, the inhabitants of Takedda/In Gall, of Agadez and of Tabelbala, and of two nomadic Berber groups, the Idaksahak and the Igdalen; a third nomadic group, the Iberogan, are black African vassals of the Igdalen.[79] Because of the considerable linguistic differences between the two Songhay languages, the separation between Northern and Southern Songhay might be traced back to a period before the arrival of the Zā/Zāghē to the area east of Gao. Since today only a minority of Songhay-speakers consider themselves – to a certain extent – to be Songhay,[80] it is only modern convention that applies this name to the two languages. In order to avoid any confusion with the later ethnogenesis of the Songhay on the Middle Niger, it is more appropriate to use the artificial terms Proto-Songhay and respectively Proto-Songhay speakers. Because of their numerical weakness the Soninke-speaking Zā/Zāghē and their followers doubtlessly began to adopt the language of the local Proto-Songhay population shortly after their arrival at Gao towards the end of the eleventh century.[81] A rapid takeover of the local language by the foreign ruling group is indicated by a number of inscriptions from Gao-Saney providing "Songhay" terms, the earliest dating from 1203 AD.[82] Though probably preceded

[76] Hama, *Histoire*, 103; Gado, *Zarmataray*, 128, 145-146; Olivier de Sardan, *Concepts*, 225; Mounkaïla, *Mythe*, 182.

[77] Cancel, "Étude", 306-307; Barth, *Travels*, I, 334-335. The Dendi and other southern Songhay speakers are not considered here because their migration to the south was most likely the result of the Moroccan invasion of Songhay in 1591 (Rouch, *Contribution*, 213-221).

[78] Rouch, *Songhay*, 12-16; Nicolaï, *Dialectes*, 14-25, 263. I now prefer to explain the Mande identity of the Zarma solely on the basis of the eastward expansion of a Zā/Zāghē elite, while earlier I conceived it in terms of a Mande substratum (Lange, "From Mande", 299).

[79] Bernus, *Touaregs nigériens*, 70, 72, 323. The Iberogan may have been sedentary people of the dry valley of Azawagh before the coming of the Iullemmeden (*ibid.*, 75). The Songhay dialect of Agadez is now extinct (Bernus/Bernus, *Du sel*, 16). See below map 11 on p. 521.

[80] Olivier de Sardan, *Concepts*, 339-340; id., *Sociétés*, 25.

[81] The research of Robert Nicolaï and others with respect to the linguistic relationship of Songhay with Targi, Gurmance and Mande concern in the first instance Proto-Songhay and not Songhay (*Parentés linguistiques*, and *La force des choses*).

[82] De Moraes Farias plausibly argues that the Gao-Saney inscriptions n° 23, 28 and 29 each have a Songhay name in the second position while a Songhay kinship term seems to occur in

by other officials of the Sisse regime, members of the new dynasty and their followers began from the end of the eleventh century onward to supplant the agents of the Qanda dynasty in the provincial districts. Despite their dispersal beyond the eastern Niger bend and the loss of their original language, these members of the Sisse establishment retained their Ghanean tradition of origin. A number of successive situations progressively led to the ethnogenesis of the Zarma: the integration of the Zā into the local population, the alignment of the Zā with Mali and the opposition between the Zā and the emerging Sonni dynasty.

2. The Almoravids and Dynastic Changes in Ghana and Gao

The deep involvement of the rulers of Gao-Saney with the spread of Islam suggests an extensive previous exposure to the new religion. In Ghana the long lasting impact of Islam led to the overthrow of divine kingship and to the subsequent rise of an Islamic state.[83] Because of geographical proximity, these revolutionary changes in Ghana were highly relevant for the history of the Gao kingdom in the Almoravid period. Indeed, there are good reasons to suppose that the heartlands of Ghana were not situated in Kumbi Saleh at a distance of 850 km from Gao, as is generally believed, but in the Lakes region of the Niger at a distance of only 400 km. While the written evidence of the tenth and the eleventh centuries concerning the capital of Ghana supports its localization in the semi-desert region of Kumbi Saleh, the textual data of the twelfth century would appear to show that the kings of Ghana were established in the much more fertile Lakes region of the river Niger.[84] Furthermore, the archaeological sites in this region, dating from the fourth to the twelfth century, include a number of royal burial mounds.[85] Finally, it is in Tendirma, the centre of the Lakes region, that Zarma tradition locates the point of departure of the legendary flight of Mali Bero to the east.[86] On the basis of the written, archaeological and oral evidence, it must be concluded that,

n° 25a. The corresponding dates for these are 1203, 1280(?), and 1253 AD (*Inscriptions*, §§ 545-547). Similarly the Fulani jihadists adopted the Hausa language a short time after their conquest of Hausaland at the beginning of the nineteenth century (Barth, *Travels*, I, 493-495, 476-477).

[83] Lange, "Chute", 169-173; id., "Almoravid expansion", 326-342.

[84] Ibn Hawqal, al-Bakri, al-Zuhri, al-Idrisi *in*: Levtzion/Hopkins, *Corpus*, 46, 79-80, 98, 109-110; Lange, "Almoravid expansion", 326-338.

[85] In the region between Sumpi and Goundam up to fifteen artificial elevations have been counted which seem to correspond to royal burial mounds (Raimbault/Sanogo, "Problématique des buttes", 249-269, 520-522). See also Mauny, *Tableau*, 93-111.

[86] Urvoy, *Histoire*, 58; Gado, *Zarmataray*, 143; Olivier de Sardan, *Concepts*, 40".

despite their expansion to the west due to the intensification of the trans-Saharan trade, the Sisse rulers continued to reside temporarily in the eastern heartlands of their empire where they buried most of their dead kings.[87] During the Songhay period, from the fifteenth to the seventeenth century, Timbuktu to the north of this region and Gao at the eastern Niger bend were in close contact. At that time the two towns were even two alternating capitals of the same kingdom.[88] Because of these geographical and historical conditions, Gao might have been a province of Ghana during the Almoravid period before it became the rump state of the Sisse.[89]

The Almoravid expansion deeply affected Ghana insofar as it precipitated the Islamization of the court and sections of the population.[90] Instead of assuming these changes resulted from a Ṣanhāja conquest,[91] it is more appropriate to think in terms of internal developments. Actually, the available written and oral evidence suggest that, in 1076 AD, the Muslim party of the court took advantage of the rise of Islamic militancy among the Berbers to overthrow the last pagan ruler Tunka-Manīn in a *coup d'état*.[92] Protected by the Almoravids but not subject to them, the new ruler, Kema-Magha, set about to promote Islamic reforms. These were apparently more successful in the eastern province of Gao,[93] where the local Qanda dynasty had already prepared the ground for the thorough implantation of Islam,[94] than in Tendirma, the ancient centre of the Ghana empire, or in any other part of the country. In 1083, he was able to conquer the trading town of Tādmekka far to the northeast with the help of the Almoravids, thereby reinforcing his influence on Gao.[95] At a second stage, probably set in motion by the death of the Almoravid leader Abū Bakr b. 'Umar in 1087, further disturbances

[87] Lange, "Chute", 165-169; *id.*, "Almoravid expansion", 326-342.

[88] According to Ibn al-Mukhtār, Sonni 'Alī had four residences: Kukiya, Gao, Kabara/Timbuktu and Wara/Dirma (*T. al-Fattāsh*, 45/tr. 85). Leo Africanus describes both Timbuktu and Gao as capitals of Songhay (*Description*, I, 15; II, 467, 471). After the Moroccan conquest in 1591, Timbuktu became the centre of the new Pashalik and the residence of puppet Songhay kings (Abitbol, *Tombouctou*, 70-74, 90-147).

[89] For more restrictive views on the extention of Ghana see Delafosse, *Haut-Sénégal*, II, 49-57; Mauny, *Tableau*, 508-511; Levtzion, *Ancient Ghana*, 27-28.

[90] Al-Zuhrī, Ibn Khaldūn *in:* Levtzion/Hopkins, *Corpus*, 98, 333.

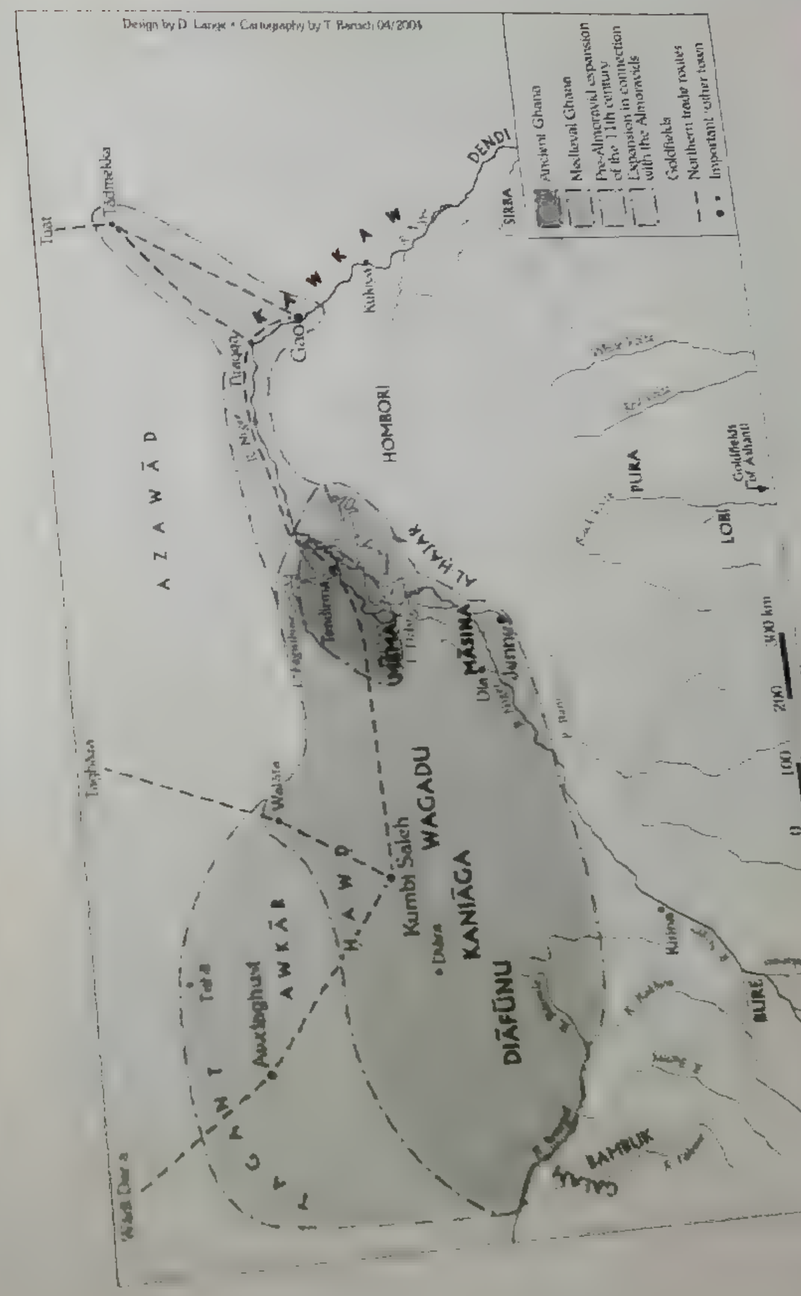
[91] Levtzion, *Ancient Ghana*, 45-46; Fage, *History*, 73-75.

[92] Lange, "Chute", 165-169; *id.*, "Almoravid expansion", 326-332.

[93] Flight mentions the lost stele of a *qādī* ("Medieval cemetery", 100, 106).

[94] Al-Muhallabi and al-Bakrī *in:* Levtzion/Hopkins, *Corpus*, 174, 87.

[95] With respect to the towns of Tādmekka and Ntala, al-Zuhrī mentions that "the people of Ghana sought the help of the Almoravids against them (*'alayhum*)" (Hadj-Sadok, "K. al-dja'rāfiyya", *181*). Levtzion/Hopkins omit to translate *'alayhum* (*Corpus*, 99).



in Ghana instigated by anti-Sisse Muslims led to the overthrow of Kema-Magha and his retreat to Gao, the eastern province of Ghana.[96]

The evidence concerning the western origin of the Zā/Zāghē provided by the Gao-Saney tombstones, the Zā/Zarma traditions of origin and a re-examination of Ghana history is supplemented by the correspondence of ancestral names. Indeed, the name Zāghī or Zāghay – here shortened to Zāghē – can be compared to the name Zāghī b. Zāghī given independently by two geographers to a great West African king. Ibn Khurradādhbih in the ninth century located the country south of Morocco and an anonymous Persian author in the tenth century mentioned the auriferous soil of his land.[97] From this information it can be deduced that both authors had in mind the kingdom of Ghana. There can be little doubt that the name Zāghī was used in Ghana as well as in Gao-Saney in reference to a highly prestigious ancestral figure. The occurrence of the Zāghē name on the royal epitaphs of Gao-Saney therefore provides further evidence for the Sisse identity of the new dynasty.

Information provided by al-Zuhrī can likewise be interpreted in the sense of a Ghanean origin of the Zāghē. According to this well-informed but not fully coherent geographer of the twelfth century, the Berbers of Tādmekka raided the land of the Barbara. Since the king of Ghana is said to be related to the Barbara, it would appear that these otherwise unknown people were equivalent to the Zarma as descendants of the Zā/Zāghē and hence the Sisse.[98] Indeed, if al-Zuhrī was referring to the Zā/Zāghē as of Sisse origin, this would not only explain the localization of these people close to Tādmekka but also their description as "the most noble and aristocratic of the Sudan" and the further remark that "all the kings of the black Africans acknowledge their nobility".[99] Considering the evidence of the epitaphs of Gao-Saney in the context of al-Zuhrī's information on the Middle Niger, the historian gets the impression that this forms the background context for the retreat of the Sisse to Gao during the Almoravid period: the Zāghē name points to the ancient nobility of the Sisse kings, the pretentious Islamic names to their far-reaching reputation, and the beautiful Andalusian stelae to the international con-

[96] At the death of Abū Bakr b. 'Umar a change of Almoravid policy towards Ghana may have contributed to the fall of Kema-Magha (Lange, "Chute", 171), but it probably did not lead to a military intervention (see below pp. 564-565).

[97] Ibn Khurradādhbih *in:* Levtzion/Hopkins, *Corpus*, 17. Ibn al-Faqīh borrowed the information from the former (*ibid.*, 27). The name Rā'ī b. Rā'ī given by *Hudūd al-'alam* can easily be amended to Zāghī b. Zāghī (Cuoq, *Recueil*, 69). See also Lange, "Chute", 158-160.

[98] In spite of a different geographical focus, my earlier attempt to identify the Barbara with the Sisse/Soso of Ghana comes close to this identification in dynastic terms (Lange, "Chute", 170-173).

[99] Al-Zuhrī *in:* Levtzion/Hopkins, *Corpus*, 99; Lange, "Chute", 170-171.

tacts of their Ṣanhāja allies. All these elements can be correlated with the Barbara. But most important of all, the historian finds in the remarks of al-Zuhrī, in spite of their slight confusion, a clear reference to the close connection between Ghana and the eastern province of Gao, as well as evidence of the prominent part taken by the Sisse of Ghana in the politics of Islamization pursued in conjunction with the Almoravids on the eastern Niger bend.[100] Furthermore, Gao must have been part of the Ghana empire otherwise the Sisse would have lacked a secure backing for their operations against Tādmekka, and they would not have had sufficient regional interest to launch a military campaign against this distant town. In other words, since the trading town of Tādmekka (Es-Sūq), situated 300 km north of Gao, was in control of the great trade axis leading from the eastern Niger bend to North Africa, its conquest could only serve for the protection of the trade of Gao. Therefore, it is reasonable to suppose that Ghana extended its influence over Gao prior to the Almoravid period, even though the Arab geographers do not mention an eastward extension of Ghanaen power.[101] As for the stages of Kema-Magha/Yāmā b. Kimā's reign, they can now be determined with some degree of certainty: he seized power in Ghana in 1076, he conquered Tādmekka in 1083, he was overthrown in 1087 in connection with the death of Abū Bakr b. 'Umar, and he sought refuge in Gao where he died on 6th November 1100.

The Berbers who dominated the country between Tādmekka and Gao were most likely the Massūfa.[102] Al-Bakrī mentions the Saghmāra in the region north of Tādmekka, a name corresponding to the present designation of a vassal class of Tuareg, the Isekkemaren.[103] The ruling group of the town were probably first the Tademekket, referred to in the tenth century as Tānamāk.[104] But later, as a result of the joint expedition of Ghana and the Almoravids against Tādmekka, the Massūfa probably began to control the northern reaches of Gao.[105] Furthermore, the Massūfa later established themselves in the Timbuktu-Walata and the Azawagh-Takedda regions.[106] We may suspect their authority behind the importation of the stelae of Gao-Saney for three reasons: forming the bulk of the Sanhāja armies

[100] Historians are used to considering the Tādmekka incident of the Almoravid period solely in terms of the imposition of orthodox Islam on the inhabitants of the town (Levtzion, *Ancient Ghana*, 45; Hunwick, "Gao revisited", 428; Cuoq, *Histoire*, 57).

[101] It should be noted that Ibn Battūta, who stayed in Gao for a whole month in 1353, likewise does not mention the overlordship of Mali (Levtzion/Hopkins, *Corpus*, 300-301).

[102] Hunwick, "Gao revisited", 424-430; Cuoq, *Histoire*, 56-58.

[103] Lhote, "Contribution", 334-340.

[104] Ibn Hawqal *in:* Levtzion/Hopkins, *Corpus*, 50-51.

[105] Al-Zuhrī *in:* Levtzion/Hopkins, *Corpus*, 99.

[106] Ibn Battūta *in:* Levtzion/Hopkins, *Corpus*, 235; Norris, *Tuareg*, 35-40; id., *Arab Conquest*, 44, 78, 277.

with the Lamtūna, they had far-reaching contacts in the Almoravid empire, they were present in the region, and they had the desire to encourage Islamic reforms in the Sudanic kingdoms.[107] Two contradictory factors may have influenced their support of the Sisse/Zāghē kings of Gao: either both parties had developed some animosities towards the Lamtūna leader of the Almoravid movement who succeeded Abū Bakr b. 'Umar in 1087, or the successful rival king of the Sisse in Ghana relinquished an earlier alliance with the Almoravids. Since, according to al-Idrīsī, the new king of Ghana acknowleged the suzerainty of the Abbasids in 1116 AD (and apparently not that of the Almoravids), it is perhaps more likely that the Sisse were ousted from power by a group of Muslims objecting to the close alliance with the Almoravids.[108] Anyway, having conquered Tādmekka with the help of the Almoravids earlier, the Sisse now benefited, notwithstanding their defeat in Ghana, from the support of the Ṣanhāja of the Gao region. With respect to the patronage implied by the shipment of the Andalusian stelae and the residence in Gao-Saney, there can be little doubt that the far-reaching Islamic reforms of the Almoravid period, including the introduction of judicial courts in particular, were the result of Sisse/Zāghē, not of Sanhāja activities.[109]

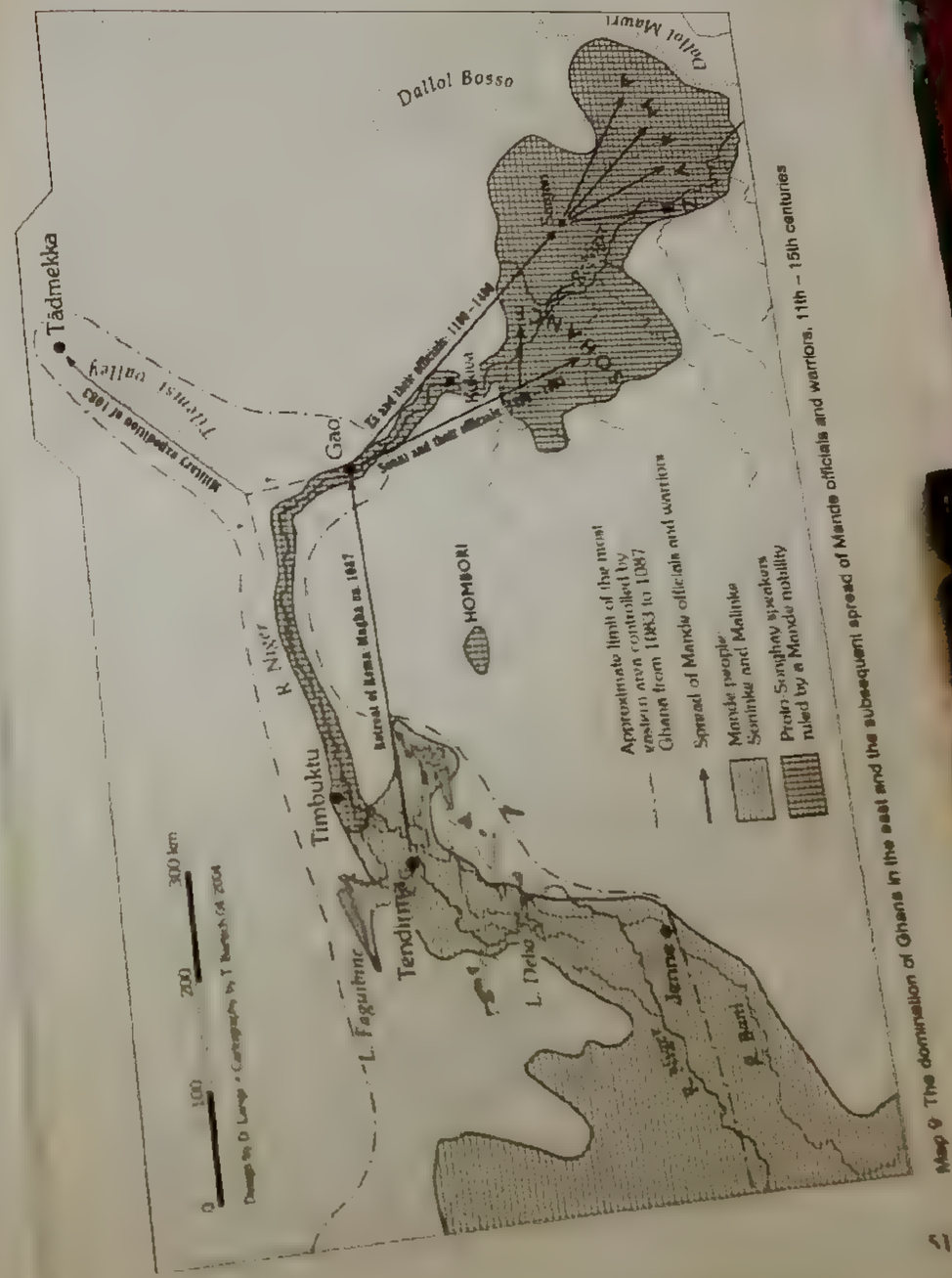
Once established in Gao-Saney, the Sisse continued to cherish their heritage as kings of Ghana despite their military defeat: they claimed descent from their great ancestor Zāghē, they prided themselves on being the first promoters of Islam (although the Qanda of Gao had been Muslims before them) and they rejected their local predecessors as pagans. These different allegations should be considered as an attempt to legitimize the encroachments of a refugee dynasty on the local royal house of the Qanda. The pairing of a number of stelae indicating that kings and queens, princes and princesses were nearly equally represented, is in this respect highly significant. It would seem to imply that the Zāghē followed a matrimonial policy consisting of deliberate marriages between Sisse princes and Qanda princesses. Besides the obvious intention to highlight the superior ancestry and the more profound Islamic faith of the Sisse kings, the precious tombstones of Gao-Saney with their elaborate epitaphs also give particular publicity to the politically relevant marriages between Zāghé men and Qanda women.[110]

[107] Bosch Vilá, *Almorávides*, 245, 256-257; Hunwick, "Gao revisited", 426-428; Lange, "Almoravid expansion", 342, 347-348.

[108] For arguments in favour of a breach between the Lamtūna and the Massūfa after the death of Abū Bakr b. 'Umar and a Lamtūna conquest of Ghana, see Lange, "Almoravid expansion", 342-347, and *id.*, "Chute", 169-173.

[109] Lange, "Chute", 156-158, 162-165. The introduction of judicial courts can be inferred from the lost stele of a *qādī* (Flight, "Medieval cemetery", 100, 106).

[110] Lange, "Rois de Gao-Sané", 261-262. For a new interpretation see below pp. 562, 563-564, 565.



Map 9 The domination of Ghana in the east and the subsequent spread of Mande officials and warriors, 11th – 15th centuries

The middle position of the Zāghē between the Ṣanhāja and the Qanda is also apparent from the residence of the newcomers from Ghana in Gao-Saney. Situated four kilometres from the royal town Gao Ancien, the twin town Gao-Saney was mainly inhabited by North African traders.[111] Within immediate reach of the nomads, the Zāghē were in a much more precarious position than the Qanda who most likely continued to reside in Gao Ancien as subservient kings. The archaeological record seems to confirm the existence of a royal court residing in Gao Ancien, since luxury goods were more frequent in Gao Ancien than in Gao-Saney. The archaeological findings also indicate that the inhabitants of Gao-Saney were not solely North African traders but also black Africans.[112] Although craftsmen must have been prominent among the inhabitants of Gao-Saney, there could also have been room for a substantial group of Soninke refugees from ancient Ghana. A rectangular building with massive walls of fired bricks to the west of the occupation mound of Gao-Saney could have been the tomb or the commemoration *qubba* of Yāmā b. Kimā, the founder of the Zāghē dynasty.[113] Its position indicates that the Zāghē resided in the western part of the town of Gao-Saney, facing Gao Ancien. Such an exposed position meant that the refugees from Ghana were much more in need of the goodwill of the nomads than the Qanda of ancient Gao. Furthermore, their constant encroachment on the earlier, largely independent but now closely controlled Qanda must have produced many frictions and hence must have necessitated continuous support from the surrounding nomads until the Zāghē definitively asserted their own authority over the entire country.

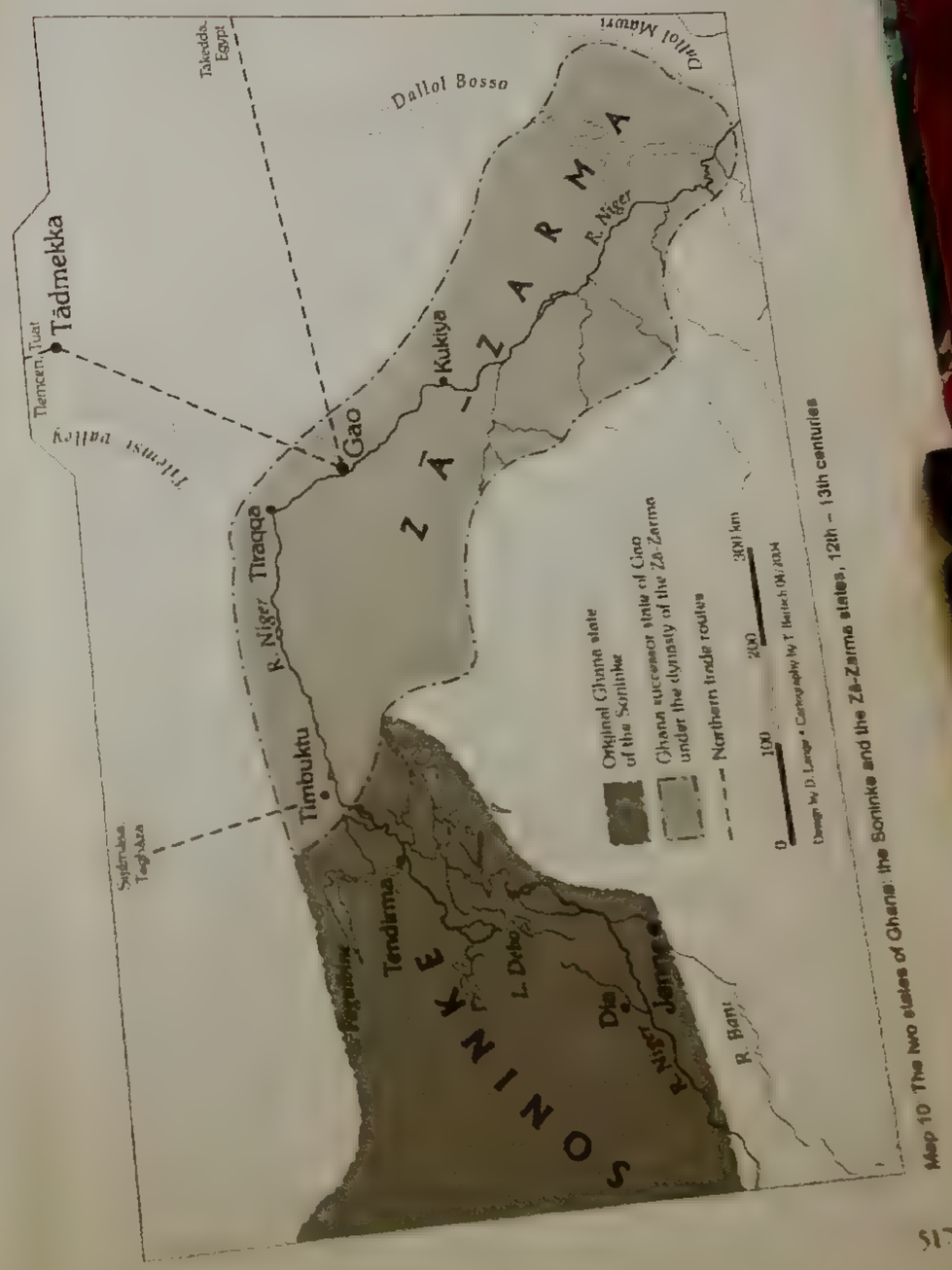
3. The Domination of Mali and the Emergence of the Songhay

Three related aspects of historical developments on the Middle Niger between the thirteenth and the fifteenth century are distinguishable: the political, the dynastic and the ethnic. Beginning with the political, this period saw the expansion of Mali from the upper Niger to the eastern Niger bend. Up to now, the rise of Mali and the inclusion of the Gao kingdom into this empire have mostly been described with the presumption of an ethnically homogeneous and stable situa-

[111] Insoll, *Islam, Archaeology*, 45-47; *id.*, "Iron Age Gao", 23-27.

[112] Insoll, *Islam, Archaeology*, 32-33, 45-47; *id.*, "Iron Age Gao", 23-27.

[113] Flight suggested that the building called structure Q was the tomb of one of the kings commemorated on the stelae, while Insoll prefers the identification of the building as a *qubba* (for both references see Insoll, *Islam, Archaeology*, 25-27). In view of the royal burial mounds of ancient Ghana, the structure Q may perhaps also be considered as the Islamic adaptation of the pagan worship of deceased kings (cf. al-Bakrī *in:* Levtzion/Hopkins, *Corpus*, 81).



tion on the Middle Niger: under the newly established leadership of Sundjata and his Keita successors, the Malinke of Mali grew stronger than the neighbouring peoples and were thus able to subdue vast regions of the Sahelian belt including the Middle Niger and in particular Gao and the Songhay people.[114]

It has been overlooked that the rise of Mali did not involve the conquest of foreign people but a process of integrating Mande or Mande-dominated neighbours into a common Islamic dominion on the basis of Ghanean heritage. According to the traditions of the Malinke, Sundjata, the founder of the Mali empire, obtained legitimacy to rule by going into exile in Mema, a country close to the Lakes region. There, in the remnant of Ghana, he is said to have distinguished himself as a warrior to such an extent that the Sisse king appointed him the leading military commander. Meanwhile, the Malinke were subject to the oppressive Sosso king Sumanguru. Some time later, Sundjata followed a call back to his country, confronted the foreign tyrant, and defeated him in the Battle of Kirina.[115] These episodes, generally dated to the first half of the thirteenth century, should not necessarily all be seen in terms of actual events. For example the Mema exile, probably patterned on mythological ideas, may just be indicative of a powerful Ghanean tradition of statehood adopted by the Malinke from the Soninke and onto which they subsequently left their own imprint.[116]

In the Gao kingdom the Keita did not face a distinct population with its own dynasty but a closely related ruling elite of Ghanean origin. During the twelfth and the thirteenth century the Zā/Zāghē kingdom was a successor state of Ghana in the same sense as the kingdom of the Soninke, since the ruling Zarma had originated from Ghana together with the Sisse/Zāghē refugee king Kema-Magha/Yāmā b. Kimā. By referring to Melle or Mali as their country of origin, the Zarma simply replaced a name associated with divine kingship by a name more compatible with Islam. In fact, their home country of Dirma or Tendirma in the Lakes region of the Niger was precisely situated in the central province of ancient and medieval Ghana. A similar case can be made for the Mali empire of the Keita, since their historical antecendents link them to the Islamic Malal of the pre-Almoravid period, situated somewhere in the neighbourhood of the Lakes region.[117] Here again Malal seems

[114] Ibn Khaldūn *in*: Levtzion/Hopkins, *Corpus*, 333. Delafosse, *Haut-Sénégal*, II, 173-191; Trimingham, *History*, 60-68; Levtzion, *Ancient Ghana*, 53-66, 73-80; Cuoq, *Histoire*, 69-75. For a critical assessment of Ibn Khaldūn's view of West African history see Lange, "Altes Mali", 588-592, 621-623.

[115] Niane, *Sundiata*, 62-72, 90-126; Johnson, *Son-Jara*, 39, 155-167, 191; Levtzion, *Ancient Ghana*, 58; Lange, "Altes Mali", 599-605.

[116] Levtzion, *Ancient Ghana*, 50, 58-60, Fage, *History*, 71, 75-76.

[117] Al-Bakrī *in*: Levtzion/Hopkins, *Corpus*, 82-83. See also Monteil, "Empires du Mali", 323-329, and Levtzion, *Ancient Ghana*, 53-55.

to be the Muslim pendant of the pagan Ghana. Hence we may assume that the name of Ghana – perhaps derived from the name of the Ganī royal festival, well-known in the Central Sudan – which was associated abroad with gold, riches and power, carried for the people directly concerned some pagan connotations which the Muslim Zarma were as eager to eliminate as the Muslim Keita.[118]

We do not know precisely under which ruler Mali extended its influence to the eastern and the western Niger bend. However, the pilgrimage custom of Malian kings is hardly conceivable without direct access to desert trade routes. Therefore Barmandāna, the first pilgrim king, who might have ruled in the twelfth century, must already have controlled the Lakes region to be able to perform the pilgrimage without having to cross foreign territory before reaching the Saharan routes.[119] Among the successors of Sundjata three are noted to have travelled to Mecca: Mansa Walī in the second half of the thirteenth century, the usurper king Sākūra towards 1300 and Mansa Mūsā in 1324.[120] According to later traditions, Mansa Mūsā travelled either by the desert route north of Timbuktu crossing Taghāza and Tuat, or he passed through Gao.[121]

In the post-Almoravid period Gao remained independent of any neighbouring kingdom for more than a century.[122] When it became subject to Mali in the second half of the thirteenth century this was not necessarily by conquest as is often supposed.[123] Al-Sa'dī simply notes that Songhay "submitted to the authority" of Mali, and dates the integration of Gao into the Mali empire to the reign of Mansa Mūsā (1312-1337).[124] He even implies that this submission was voluntary since it occurred during the time of Mansa Mūsā's absence on pilgrimage. Similarly the

[118] According to al-Bakrī and to the author of *K. al-Istibṣār* Ghāna was the title of the king (Levtzion/Hopkins, *Corpus*, 79, 146). For the importance of the *tabaski* or *id al-kabīr* feast in Ghana see Monteil, "Légende", 378. Similarly Portuguese authors refer to the king of a powerful state – either the Igala kingdom, Bornu or Ife – to whom the Oba of Benin owed some kind of allegiance, as Ogane (Hodgkin, *Nigerian Perspectives*, 122, 124). In each state the king was involved in an important New Year festival which in Igalaland is called Ogani, in Bornu Gani, and in Ife Itapa.

[119] Ibn Khaldūn *in*: Levtzion/Hopkins, *Corpus*, 322, 333. Al-Bakrī mentions a Muslim king of Malal before the Almoravid period (*ibid.*, 82).

[120] Ibn Khaldūn *in*: Levtzion/Hopkins, *Corpus*, 322-323, 333-335.

[121] Both al-Sa'dī and Ibn al-Mukhtār claim that Mansa Musa took the route of Tuat (*T. al-Sūdān*, Tr. 13; *T. al-Fattāsh*, 34/tr. 59), but the "Notice historique" has him passing through Gao (*T. al-Fattāsh*, 335).

[122] According to al Idrīsī, the ruler of Gao had the *khutba* delivered in his own name (Levtzion/Hopkins, *Corpus*, 113).

[123] Delafosse, *Haut-Sénégal*, II, 188-189; Levtzion, *Ancient Ghana*, 75; Cuoq, *Histoire*, 74.

[124] Houdas translates *malaka sughay* "he ruled Songhay" misleadingly as "il s'empara du Songhaï" (*T. al-Sūdān*, Tr. 13-14).

T. al-Fattāsh records the passing of Mansa Mūsā through Gao without any hint of a prior conquest.[125] However, trying to present a coherent picture of the historical developments of the Western Sudan from the eleventh to the fourteenth century, Ibn Khaldūn associates the expansion of Mali with military exploits. He claims that either Mansa Sākūra or Saghamanja, a general of Mansa Mūsā, conquered Gao.[126] Disregarding this statement as being based on a preconception, it appears to be more appropriate to consider the extension of Mali's influence on Gao in terms of a process of self-engendered aggrandisement. On the basis of common heritage with Ghana, the bonds of Mande ethnicity, and unifying Islamic solidarity, the ruling class of Gao under the leadership of the Zā appears to have consented to enter into an alliance with Mali as a junior partner.

The concrete implications of Mali's rule in Gao are difficult to determine. Al-'Umarī counts Gao and other countries among the provinces of Mali, but he provides no details on the administration of the empire. Ibn Battūta stayed in Gao for one month in 1353, but he fails to refer to the political leadership of the town. Having earlier mentioned the governor of Mali in Timbuktu and a *farba* (Malian governor) in a village on the way to Gao, his silence seems to indicate that Gao lay within the sphere of influence of Mali. More clearly, the evidence provided by Ibn Khaldūn on the integration of Takedda into the Mali empire implies that Gao was firmly in the hands of the Keita.[127] These external sources suggest that Gao was a peaceful province of imperial Mali during the fourteenth century.

The geographical extension of Mali's influence beyond Gao can likewise be determined on the basis of information provided by Arabic writers.[128] According to al-'Umarī, the empire of Mali extended from Tūra on the Atlantic ocean in the west to the longitude of Mūlī in the east or, following another text, to Bornū.[129] Ibn Battūta mentions a locality called Mūlī downstream of Gao but he describes it as a village of the Limiyyūn forming the last district of Mali. Beyond it there lay the powerful kingdom of Nupe which no white man could enter.[130] Mūlī, situated somewhere between Gao on one side and Bornu and Nupe on the

[125] Ibn al-Mukhtār, *T. al-Fattāsh*, (NH), 335. The reluctance of internal sources to admit foreign conquest is, in view of the later rise of the Songhay, in this case irrelevant.

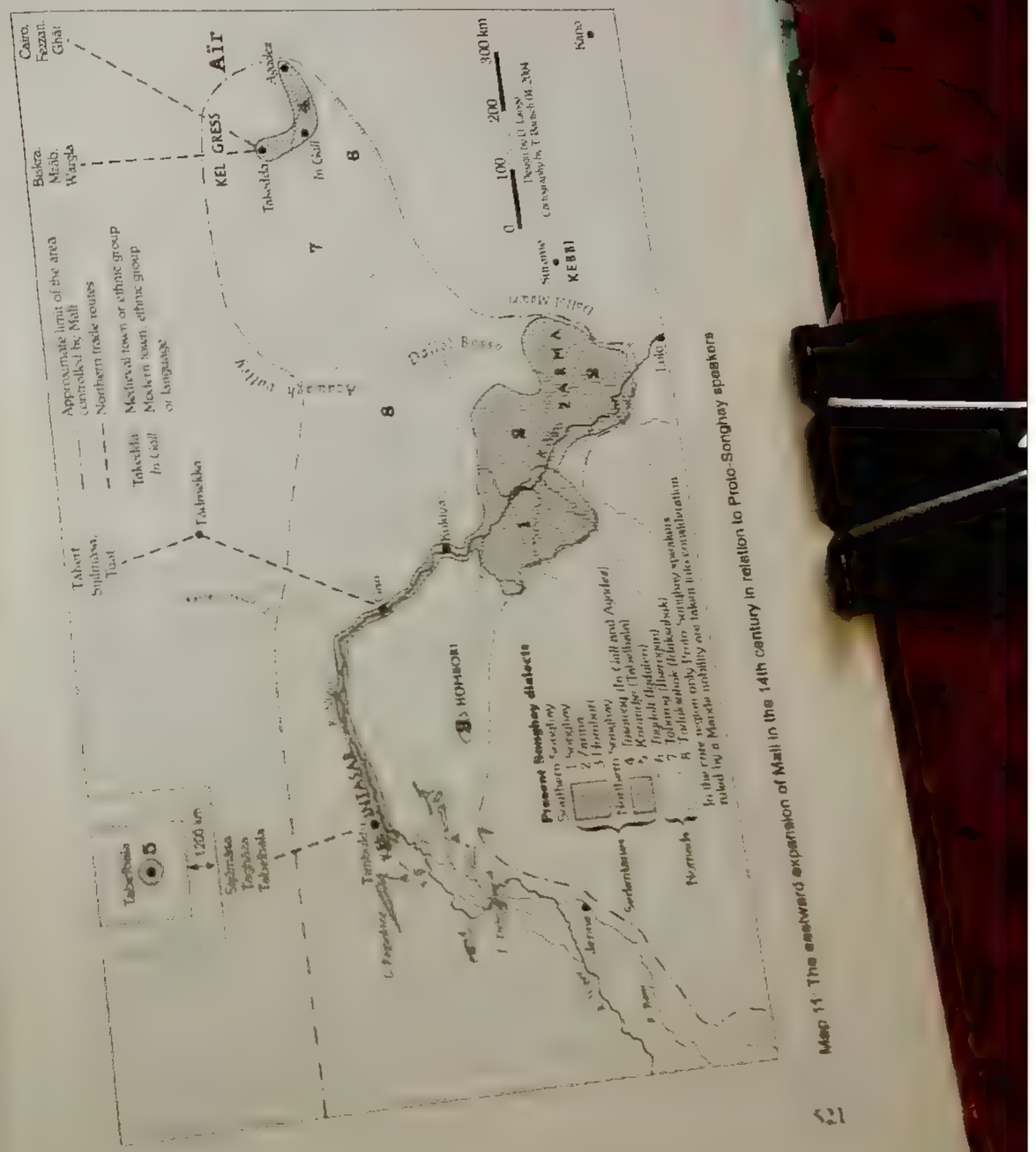
[126] Levtzion/Hopkins, *Corpus*, 334.

[127] Al-'Umarī, Ibn Battūta, Ibn Khaldūn *in:* Levtzion/Hopkins, *Corpus*, 261, 300-301, 336.

[128] For earlier attempts to delimit the borders of Mali, see Delafosse, *Haut-Sénégal*, II, 191, 221; Mauny, *Tableau*, 511-514; Levtzion, *Ancient Ghana*, 75-80.

[129] Al-'Umarī, *Masālik* and *Ta'rīf*, in: Levtzion/Hopkins, *Corpus*, 262, 276. Tūra could correspond to Futa Toro situated south of the Senegal and close to the Atlantic ocean.

[130] The translation of Levtzion and Hopkins is here misleading because according to the text *baldat Mūlī*, situated in the land of the Limiyyūn, was the last district of Mali (*Corpus*, 287).



Map 11: The eastward expansion of Mali in the 14th century in relation to Proto-Songhay speakers

other, seems to be equivalent to the Dallol Mawri stretching from the north to the south and therefore constituting a longitudinal delimitation. At present, this dry valley corresponds to the eastern limit of Zarma territory and could therefore be considered the eastern most extension of Mali's authority. Furthermore, Mūli seems to refer to the related ethnic name Mawrī which designates Zarma-speaking groups belonging to the Mande tradition and Hausa-speaking groups of the Bornu tradition inhabiting the northern reaches of the Dallol Mawri.[131] In the south, the Tienga living on both sides of the Niger at the confluence of the Dallol Mawri and beyond could correspond to Ibn Battūṭa's Līmiyyūn.[132]

In the north, the hegemony of Mali extended to Walāta, and in the northwest to the trading town of Takedda, where it included the Tuareg tribes of Kel Intasar and Kel Gress or Kel Gharus.[133] It is disputed whether Takedda, located near Aïr, was controlled by Mali or not. Al-'Umarī mentions that the copper-producing town of Zkrī, Dkrī or Nkwī, probably Takedda, belonged to Mali during the reign of Mansa Mūsā.[134] Having visited Takedda himself, Ibn Battūta reports that the town was under the rule of a Berber sultan and that its copper was exported to Gobir and Bornu.[135] During his stay in Biskra, Ibn Khaldūn heard of Takedda, in the south of Wargla. Founded by the Ṣanhāja, the town was, according to him, subject to Mali. From there, a huge caravan and many black African pilgrims annually went to Cairo, whence the pilgrims continued to Mecca. Despite his dependence on Mali, the Berber sultan of the town entertained diplomatic relations with Mzāb and with Wargla.[136] On the basis of a supposed confusion of copper for salt and in view of the localization of the town "south of Wargla, slightly to the west", it has been argued that Ibn Khaldūn mistakenly wrote Takedda instead of Tādmekka.[137] However, such a mistake is unlikely for a number of reasons. First, a rich copper mine has been discovered close to Takedda/Azelik and therefore Takedda did undoubtedly export copper.[138] Second, al-'Umarī's reference to

[131] Karimou, *Tradition orale*, 18-40, 68-78; Piault, *Histoire*, 91-95.

[132] Limiyyūn is a generic name applied like Lamlam and Niamiam to southern people considered to be barbarian (see Levtzion, *Ancient Ghana*, 54).

[133] Al-'Umarī, Ibn Battūta, Ibn Khaldūn *in*: Levtzion/Hopkins, *Corpus*, 262, 284, 331, 336, 338-339. According to al-'Umarī, the Berbers Yantasar and Tīn Gharās were under the rule of Mali, while those of Aïr and Tademekka were independent (*ibid.*, 262, 274). On the Kel Intasar/Igellād see Marty, *Études*, I, 251-327.

[134] Levtzion/Hopkins, *Corpus*, 272. In Arabic the name can easily be emended to Takedda.

[135] Al-'Umarī and Ibn Battūta *in*: Levtzion/Hopkins, *Corpus*, 272, 302.

[136] Ibn Khaldūn *in*: Levtzion/Hopkins, *Corpus*, 336, 338.

[137] Lhote, "Contribution à l'étude des Touarègs", 359-369; Levtzion, *Ancient Ghana*, 77-78.

[138] Mauny, *Tableau*, 139-141; Poncet, "Région d'In Gall", 65; Bucaille, "Takeddā", 736-752.

the copper-producing Zkrī/Takedda subject to Mali, confirms the validity of Ibn Khaldūn's information. Third, for geographical reasons close diplomatic relations are more likely to have existed between Takedda and Biskra, Mzāb, and Wargla, than between Tādmekka and these three northern towns, since the trade route from Tādmekka led directly to Tuat, Sijilmāsa, and Tāhert further to the west. Fourth, on account of better travelling conditions Takedda was a more suitable meeting place for large caravans heading to the east than Tādmekka. Fifth, being situated nearly due south of Wargla, Takedda could easily be mistaken as lying "slightly to the west of south" on account of the north-south desert routes skirting the Hoggar mountains to the west.[139] Sixth, the Berbers Tīn Gharās mentioned by al-'Umarī as being subject to Mali could be either the Kel Gress or the Kel Gharus, both groups of the eastern Tuareg. At that time the Kel Gress inhabited the region west of Aïr including Takedda/Azelik, where the Kel Gharus live at present.[140] Seventh, the black African sedentary population of Takedda/Azelik consisted of speakers of Tasawaq, a dialect of Northern Songhay, who nowadays are mainly found in the region of In Gall, 80 km south of the ancient town. Therefore, the expansion of the Mali empire far to the east did not only involve Berbers but also black Africans speaking a language of Proto-Songhay.[141] Finally, since al-'Umarī refers, in the middle of the fourteenth century, to the Berber sultan of Tādmekka as an independent ruler,[142] we can discard the idea that Ibn Khaldūn intended to point out that this ruler was dependent on Mali by the end of the fourteenth century. The textual and geographical evidence therefore suggests that, in fact, medieval Mali controlled Takedda at the foot of the Aïr mountains, 730 km east of Gao. In this region, Malian domination may have been preceded by the large territorial expansion of the Gao kingdom in the tenth century.[143] It was certainly succeeded by the Songhay conquest of western Aïr at the beginning of the sixteenth century.[144] In each case the Proto-Songhay-speakers must have provided the ethnic foundation of the territorial expansion towards the east.

[139] H. Lhote and N. Levtzion situate Takedda southeast of Wargla ("Contribution à l'étude des Touarègs", 361, *Ancient Ghana*, 77). In fact, Takedda/Azelik (6° 42' E) lies less than 2° east of the longitude of Wargla (4° 54' E).

[140] Al-'Umarī *in*: Levtzion/Hopkins, *Corpus*, 262. Cuoq reads Shagharāsan (*Recueil*, 265). For the history and localization of the Kel Gress and the Kel Gharus, see Bernus, *Touaregs nigériens*, 57-60; 319-320.

[141] Bernus/Bernus, *Du sel*, 12-29; Norris, *Tuaregs*, 35-40; Nicolaï, *Dialectes*, 14-25, 262; Hamani, *Sultanat touareg*, 95-109.

[142] Levtzion/Hopkins, *Corpus*, 274.

[143] Al-Ya'qūbī *in*: Levtzion/Hopkins, *Corpus*, 21.

[144] Al-Sa'dī, *Ta'rīkh al-Sūdān*, 78, 78/tr. 124, 129; Ibn al-Mukhtār, *Ta'rīkh al-Fattāsh*, 70/tr. 135, 339; Hamani, *Sultanat touareg*, 205-210.

The cessation of Mali's authority over Gao can be dated to the beginning of the fifteenth century, some time before Timbuktu's independence in 1433.[145] It was, in one way or another, connected to the emergence of the Sonni, which both chroniclers associate with the flight of 'Alī Kolon from Mali towards the end of the thirteenth century. Al-Sa'dī describes the escape of the dynastic founder from the court of Mali as an heroic act of liberation which "severed his people's ties of subordination to the sultan of Mali".[146] The author of the *T. al-Fattāsh* does not present 'Alī Kolon as a national hero but as somebody who was born in Mali and served the ruler, but broke with him for reasons too complex to explain.[147] Accordingly, historians are divided. While some depict the hero as a hostage who was kept by force at the court of Mali,[148] others consider him a Malian adventurer or a governor who rebelled.[149] Besides the tradition of origin, the latter base their argument on the *Sonni* and *Shy* title of the new kings, which means "representative" or "confidant of the ruler" indicating a position of dependency on a supreme ruler.[150] These elements convey the impression that 'Alī Kolon might have been one of the numerous officials at the court of Mali recruited from among the subordinate dynasties all over the empire. Notwithstanding the prospects of advancement and lustre at the imperial court, he would appear to have decided to no longer exert himself in the interests of Mali, but to return to his country instead in order to organize a rebellion. It needed the efforts of a long line of Sonni petty rulers before this plan came to fruition.[151] However, this image conveyed

[145] Al-Sa'dī, *T. al-Sūdān*, 9, 22/tr. 17, 37-38. Levtzion thinks that Malian hegemony over Gao ceased by the end of the fourteenth century (*Ancient Ghana*, 84), while Hunwick believes that it continued well into the fifteenth century (*Timbuktu*, XXXVII).

[146] Al-Sa'dī, *T. al-Sūdān*, 6/tr. 11-12; Hunwick, *Timbuktu*, 8. De Moraes Farias casts doubt on the historicity of 'Alī Kolon by pointing out the similarity of this figure with the culture hero Aligurran of Tuareg legends (*Inscriptions*, §§ 165-184, 228-239).

[147] Ibn al-Mukhtār, *T. al-Fattāsh* (NH), 334. Following Monteil ("Empires du Mali", 165-166), most historians suppose that Songhay was a rebellious province which was conquered and liberated more than once (Rouch, *Contribution*, 180; Trimingham, *History*, 91-92; Levtzion, *Ancient Ghana*, 75-76).

[148] Delafosse, *Haut-Sénégal*, II, 73; Levtzion, *Ancient Ghana*, 75; Cuoq, *Histoire*, 74, 141, 143.

[149] Trimingham, *History*, 66; Cuoq, *Histoire*, 142; Hunwick, *Timbuktu*, XXXVII.

[150] On the authority of Mahmūd Ka'ti, Ibn al-Mukhtār writes that *Shy* (= Sonni) means *koy benendi* "representative or substitute of the sultan" (*T. al-Fattāsh*, 43/tr. 82). According to Delafosse *sōñni* (Sonni) has in Malinke the similar meaning of "subordinate or confidant of the ruler" (cf. Hunwick, *Timbuktu*, 333-334).

[151] 'Alī Kolon would then have been a hero comparable to Ya'qūb Nabame, the leader of the Kebbi movement of independence from Sokoto in the nineteenth century (cf. Last, *Sokoto Caliphate*, 84-85).

by the Songhay traditions is partly contradicted by the legendary nature of the 'Alī Kolon figure established in reference to the parallel Aligurran narratives of the Tuareg.[152] Still, there are strong reasons to believe that the descendants of the Zāghē were deeply affected by the extension of Malian rule over the Niger bend. In the light of this major event of Gao history, the 'Alī Kolon episode reads like an attempt to explain the split-off of the Sonni from the Zā.

In fact, the political position of the Sonni needs to be seen in the context of the ethnic situation of the eastern Niger bend. Up to the fourteenth century, we do not find any indication that there was a Songhay population living in the region of the Middle Niger. In the eleventh century, the inhabitants of Gao are called Bazarkāniyyīn, in the twelfth Barbara, and in the fourteenth Yartān.[153] Also, on the dynastic level none of the ruling houses of Gao can be identified as Songhay. The first dynasty, the Qanda, may have been Proto-Songhay, but their real ethnic identity remains unknown.[154] The Mande influence on the eastern Niger bend seems to have resulted from the expansion of the Ghana empire to the east in the eleventh century. Later traditions associate the spread of a Soninke elite among the Proto-Songhay – which led to the ethnogenesis of the Zarma – specifically with the flight of the Sisse/Zā from Ghana to Gao towards the end of the eleventh century.[155] Various indications show that the Sonni themselves belonged to this group of Mande immigrants. According to al-Maghīlī, the ancestors of Sonni 'Alī more than thirty kings before him – a number apparently including at the beginning the Muslim kings of the Zā[156] – rose up against the pre-Almoravid rulers of Gao. The same genealogical claims probably also involving the Zā were made by Askiya Muhammad.[157] The author of the *T. al-Fattāsh* goes one step further when he links the ancestors of Sonni 'Alī and those of Askiya Muhammad and adds that they were both of Wangara and Soninke origin.[158] Present-day traditions about the descendants of the Sonni, the Sohance, confirm a Wangara and hence

[152] For these comparisons see de Moraes Farias, *Inscriptions*, §§ 165-184. However, the reference to the "Moses motif" as an indication of a foreign conquest neglects the local origin of the Sonni going back to the Almoravid period (*idem*, §§ 190, 448; al-Maghīlī *in* Hunwick, *Shari'a*, I.M/tr. 69).

[153] Al-Bakrī, al-Zuhrī, al-Umarī *in*: Levtzion/Hopkins, *Corpus*, 87, 99, 261. Trimingham thinks that the members of the ruling class of Gao in the twelfth century were either Zaghāwa or Baghāmā (*History*, 89).

[154] In view of the wide distribution of Songhay languages, it is very likely that they spoke Proto-Songhay and not a Mande or a Voltaic language.

[155] Lange, "Chute", 169-173; *id.*, "Almoravid expansion", 341-342.

[156] Cf. Hunwick, *Shari'a*, 69 n. 1; Lange, "From Mande", 294.

[157] Al-Maghīlī *in* Hunwick, *Shari'a*, 13, 17/tr. 69, 72.

[158] Literally Wangara and Wa'kuriyyīn, i.e. Soninke (Ibn al-Mukhtār, *T. al-Fattāsh*, 48/tr. 93-94).

a Soninke origin of the dynastic ancestors.[159] Furthermore, the dynastic title of Sonni may have been derived from a royal Ghanean title which, by the addition of the ethnic marker *-nke*, gave rise among the northern Mande to the ethnonym Soninke.[160] Therefore, the Sonni were very likely part of the Mande, or more precisely Soninke, ruling class of medieval Gao.

Who were the Songhay and when did they arrive in their present location? Although the language later called Songhay was established on the eastern Niger bend in ancient times, the Songhay properly speaking did not emerge before the fourteenth century. None of the Arab authors before al-Maghīlī mentions them by this or a similar ethnic name.[161] Only the appellation Zaghāy applied by Ibn Baṭṭūṭa and Ibn Khaldūn to people living between the Middle Niger and Hausaland bears some resemblance to the name Songhay.[162] Evidence for the former settlement of Songhay people in a region later integrated into the Hausa world comes from a Hausa tradition from the beginning of the nineteenth century according to which the people of Kebbi descend from a Songhay father and a Katsina mother.[163] Likewise, linguistic and mythological survivals bear testimony to the presence of culture traits in Kebbi later associated with the Songhay.[164] However, these indications do not suffice to establish the emergence of a specific Songhay identity in Kebbi, and a fourteenth or fifteenth century migration of some of these people to the eastern Niger bend as I thought before.[165]

According to a more plausible interpretation, the Zaghāy of western Hausaland and beyond owed their appellation to their common cultural heritage with the Zaghāy of Kanem-Bornu. The eastern Zaghāy were descendants of the Zaghāwa, the first ruling group of the Chadic state.[166] This implies that they must have spoken Kanuri, while the western Zaghāy must have used Hausa and perhaps Songhay. Such a linguistic diversity undermines the argument that the common features of the western and eastern Zaghāy can be conceived in terms of modern ethnicity. Presently, two peoples of western Hausaland are considered to be closely related to the inhabitants of Zamfara and of Kebbi. Barth specifically

[159] Olivier de Sardan, *Concepts*, 336.
[160] Cf. Binger, *Du Niger*, II, 376, 384; Delafosse, *Haut-Sénégal*, I, 122-123, 177.
[161] Al-Maghīlī *in:* Hunwick, *Sharī'a*, 14/tr. 70.
[162] Levtzion/Hopkins, *Corpus*, 302, 333; Lovejoy, "Role of the Wangara", 181.
[163] Bello, *Infāq*, 46-47; transl. Arnett, *Rise*, 13; Lange, "Frühes Kebbi", 155-157.
[164] The main Bori spirits of the Songhay tradition in Kebbi are Dandu, Dango, Harakoi Dikko, Kirei and Musa Maye (unpubl. field research 1995, 1996). See also Lange, "Frühes Kebbi", 163-164, and "Dimension", 173-178.
[165] Lange, "Rois de Gao-Sanē", 254-255; *id.*, "From Mande", 289-290.
[166] Levtzion/Hopkins, *Corpus*, 21, 171, 354; Lange, "Ethnogenesis", 265, 271; *id.*, "From Mande", 290-292.

calls them Azna.[167] In terms of the Hausa legend they belong – together with a number of other societies southwest of Hausaland – to the *Banzā bakwài* "the seven *Banzā*" states. It has been shown that the distinction between the *Hausā bakwài* "the seven *Hausā*" and the *Banzā bakwài* was based in pre-Islamic times on the prevalence of either the clans of upperworld or the clans of netherworld deities.[168] Among the Kanuri the same dichotomy applies to the Duguwa and Sefuwa, the former having been overthrown around 1068 AD by the latter.[169] In view of this structural similarity between the Aznā and the Duguwa, it is not surprising that Arab authors applied to them the same name Zaghāy, related to the appellation Aznā.

Going one step further we have to ask whether the Zāghī or Zāghay rulers of Gao-Saney, the Zāghē, likewise claimed descent from an ancestral deity related to the netherworld.[170] As noted above, the Zāghē originated in all likelihood from Ghana. From the legend of Wagadu it appears that the people of Ghana believed in a primordial snake called Bida. The snake allowed the newcomers to establish themselves in the country, it taught them how to cultivate, it provided them with gold, and it protected the king. The legend further equates the fall of Ghana with the killing of the snake and the shift of the gold to Bure. Descendants of the kings of Ghana continue to practice a specific snake cult up to the present time.[171] These elements suggest that the ancestral appellation Zāghē referred to a kingdom in which the primordial snake was highly venerated and in which the rulers practiced some form of snake cult. As the snake was the principal symbol of the netherworld, it would therefore appear that indeed the ancestors of the Zāghē of Gao-Saney belonged, like the Aznā of Hausaland, and like the Duguwa of Kanem-Bornu, to the section of society related by their clan deities to the netherworld.[172]

In contradistinction to the Zāghē and the Zarma, the Songhay – and accordingly the Proto-Songhay – might have been different. In the centre of their

[167] Barth, *Travels*, III, 154 (the whole of Kebbi), 634 (the Zamfara town Tymbu).
[168] See above pp. 229-234.
[169] See above pp. 243-248. The name Azgha applied by the Tuareg to the Kanuri (Aloialy, *Lexique*, 211) may therefore refer to the Zaghawa/Duguwa and Zaghāy periods of Kanem-Bornu history.
[170] Perhaps the widespread occurrence of Yemen in Sudanic traditions of origin corresponds to an Islamizing transposition into legend of the Zaghāwa-Zaghāy reference to the deities and clans of the netherworld (see chart 1, p. 503).
[171] Monteil, "Légende", 377-380, 391-395; Piques, "Estrade royale", 1643-1645.
[172] At first sight the hypothesis of an Aznā identity of the Zāghē seems difficult to reconcile with the fall of the Duguwa in Kanem during the process of Islamization (see above pp. 243-248). However, it is quite conceivable that the contrast between two clan-families was in Ghana and Gao less accentuated than in Kanem.

cult-mythological universe stood the thunder and weather-god Dongo.[173] Even their ethnonym seems to have been derived from Songo, another form of the name of the weather-god, with the additional suffix *–ay* for "people of".[174] There are two ways of looking at Dongo/Songo, either as a weather-god and in this sense representing the deities of the upperworld, or as the leading deity of foreign invaders and in this sense being on the side of the netherworld.[175] It is on this distinction that our perception of the role of the early Zāghē kings in Gao depends. Were they foreigners who wanted to set themselves apart from the local elite by referring to their own ancestor, or were they flexible newcomers who wanted to integrate themselves as much as possible into the local setting? In view of the Caliphal loan names of the Zā/Zāghē and their association with the Almoravids, it is perhaps more likely that the new kings of Gao intended to highlight their Islamic orientation and their high ancestry in contrast to the more modest claims of the local rulers.[176]

With respect to the geographical origin of the Songhay we note that some authors suppose that these enigmatic people were first established in the Niger region downstream of Dendi and east of the Dallol Mawri in Kebbi.[177] Even the chroniclers of Timbuktu, in spite of their intention to present the Gao kingdom as a Songhay state, depict the Songhay in certain instances as not yet fully established in Gao and on the eastern Niger bend.[178] Nevertheless, the available evidence does not support the idea of a late medieval westward migration *en masse*. Also, it is problematic to link Songhay expansion with a probably earlier migration of Sorko fishermen. To arrive at a better understanding of the slow emergence of a new Songhay warrior elite we have to turn our attention once more to the dynastic history of Gao.

[173] Rouch, *Religion*, 68-69; Lange, "Ursprung des Wettergottes Schango", 227-235.

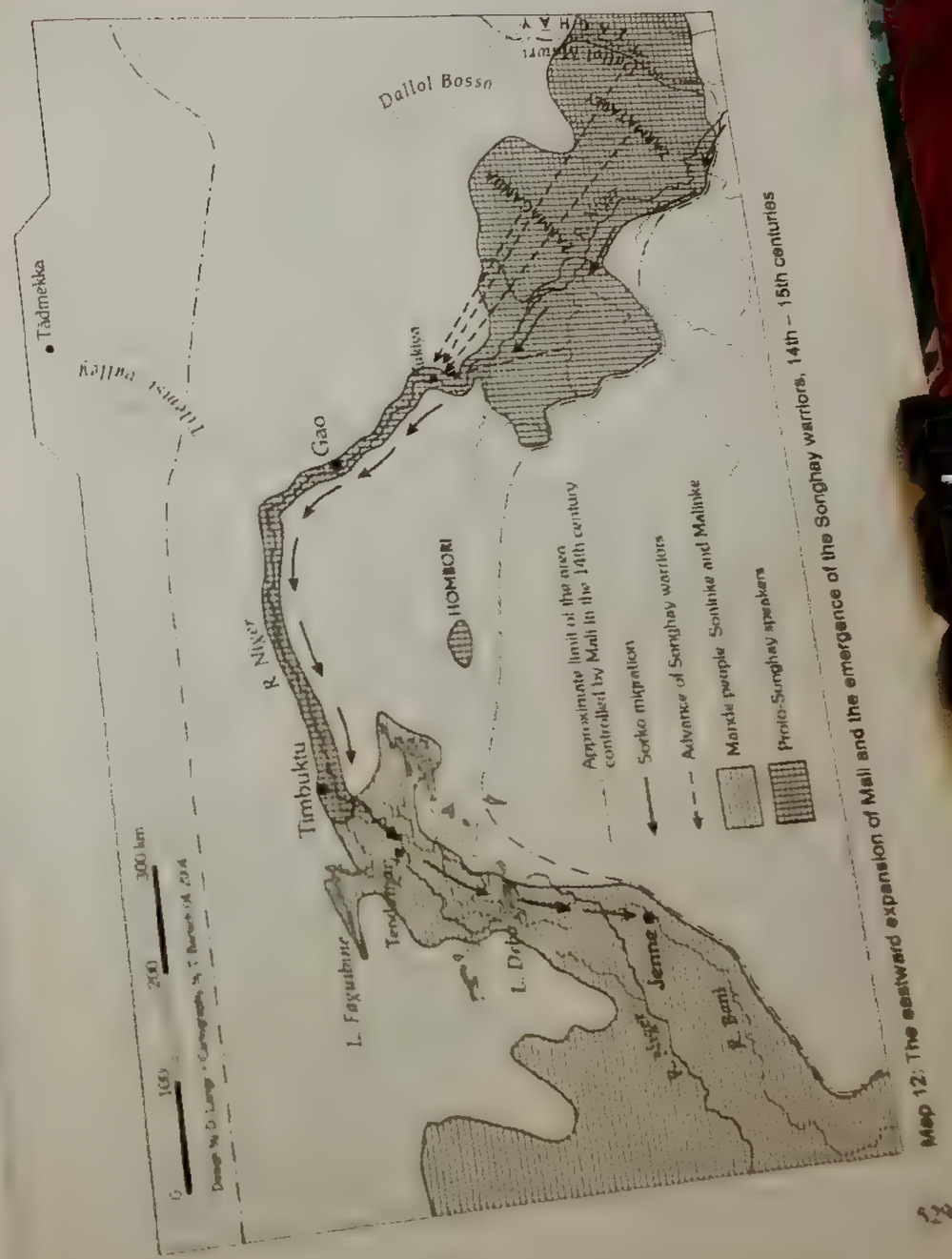
[174] In Songhay the suffix *–ey* indicates plural determination for nouns including professional groups (Prost, *Langue*, 48; Lange, "From Mande", 290).

[175] The latter is the case for Danko among the Hausa (Besmer, *Horses*, 87-89, 170; FN 96, 14, 23, 28 [all Daura]; FN 97, 8, 26-27, 33, 61 [all Daura]; 29 [Katsina], 84 [Sulleja]). See also above p. 249.

[176] Alternatively various groups might have been brought together under the umbrella of a common ancestor as suggested by de Moraes Farias (*Inscriptions*, § 403).

[177] Delafosse considers the region between Kebbi, the lower Dendi, and the Dallol Bosso as the cradle of the Songhay (*Haut-Sénégal*, I, 239-240). Rouch locates the region of origin of the Sorko in Dendi and of the Songhay in Kukiya ("Sorkawa", 9-13; *Contribution*, 165-172).

[178] Al-Sa'di, *T. al-Sūdān*, 292, 310, 311/tr. 444, 468, 471. With respect to a meeting of Askiya Muhammad in Gao, Ibn al-Mukhtār distinguishes between "all the Songhay" and the "nobles and common people" of Gao (*T. al-Fattāsh*, 59). The distinction is still maintained during the reign of Askiya Ismā'īl (1537-1539) (*T. al-Fattāsh*, 145/tr. 261. The translation here is misleading. In fact, the Songhay are in this instance differentiated from the inhabitants of Gao).



Map 12: The eastward expansion of Mali and the emergence of the Songhay warriors, 14th – 15th centuries

The actual rulers of Gao during the Mali period were apparently the Zā. Although al-Sa'dī attaches the Sonni genealogically to the Zā by claiming that 'Alī Kolon was a son of Zā Yāsiboy, the last but five of the Zā,[179] the Sonni stood in opposition to them. Yet, as we have seen, this confrontation was not the result of the foreign origins of the Sonni, since the birth of 'Alī Kolon in Mali should be interpreted, on the basis of Sonni traditions, as a reference to a simultaneous opposition to Mali and to the Zā.[180] Indeed, the main point of dissent between the Zā and the Sonni must have been the question of Malian suzerainty: while the Zā continued to rule in the ancient capital of Gao as vassals of the Keita, the Sonni founded their own independent court in Kukiya early during the Mali period.[181] A close connection between Zā and Malian domination is suggested in particular by the Zarma tradition of Zarmale. The tribal patriarchs are again supposed to have left Melle or Mali, often situated south of Māsina but sometimes also at Dirma/Tendirma,[182] on the flying base of a granary. They are either thought to have come by way of Hombori or Gao. During a further stopover in Wanzerbe, they are said to have met the Sohance who opposed them.[183] Such a sequence, first the Sonni and then the Zarma, and the particular connections of the patriarchs with the Malinke, would seem to imply that the arrival of the Zarma founding heros was not only related to the expansion of Ghana but also to that of Mali. It further suggests that Malian suzerainty was at one stage reinforced by the presence of a Malinke governor and his people in Gao.

Firmly established in Kukiya, in all likelihood the Sonni led a tenacious struggle of resistance against Malian authority interspersed with periods of nominal rapprochment.[184] Towards the end of the fifteenth century, al-Maghīlī refers to vigorous Songhay warriors by stating that the successive Sonni kings each had

[179] *T. al-Sūdān*, 5/tr. 9-10.

[180] According to the local tradition of Gao recorded by al-Maghīlī, the ancestors of Sonni 'Alī conquered Gao and imposed Islam (Hunwick, *Shari'a*, 13/tr. 69; Lange, "From Mande", 293-294, 297).

[181] Ibn al-Mukhtār, *T. al-Fattāsh*, 45/tr. 85. Earlier I conceived the Zā and the Sonni as two distinct royal clans (from different origins) which existed for a long time side by side ("Chute", 172; "From Mande", 297-299).

[182] Ardant du Picq, *Population africaine*, 17, and Urvoy, *Histoire*, 56, refer to the first tradition and Gado, *Zarmatarey*, 148-149, 160, and Mounkaïla, *Mythe*, 141, to the second.

[183] Rouch, *Contribution*, 207-208. A Songhay tradition of Tera insists on the alignment of the Zarma and the Malinke, their common retreat to Mali and the later return of the Zarma (Soumaila, *Traditions des Songhay*, 23-25).

[184] Hunwick considers the first Sonni king as a Zā prince who revolted against Malian rule and he compares the attitude of the Malians towards the Sonni of Kukiya with the attitude of the later Moroccan Arma towards the Askiyas of Dendi (*Timbuktu*, XXXVII-XXXVIII). De Moraes Farias believes that the Sonni were a Mandinka war band (*Inscriptions*, §§ 449-450).

to fight and subdue them before they could assume power.[185] Oral traditions of Tera mention the arrival of the Songhay during the period of Malian domination, their friendly reception by the Sorko, their refusal to pay taxes to Mali, and their intermarriage with Zarma women. The traditions further connect the defeat of Mali with the flight of the Zarma to their country of origin.[186] These pieces of information establish a link between the political and the ethnic history of the eastern Niger bend. First the Songhay, having probably been attracted by the powerful Sonni leaders, came into the river valley where they met the Sorko. Lacking a united aristocracy of their own they accepted the Sonni leaders in spite of their Mande origins. Although it cannot be excluded that a vanguard came from beyond the Dallol Mawri, the majority of the Songhay warriors were most likely composed of the thwarted Proto-Songhay nobles who were subjugated by the Zā. With the support of these warrior horsemen, the Sonni were in the long run able to expel the Zā from Gao and to confine Zā power to that of a provincial aristocracy ruling over the Zarma.[187] Hence it would appear that the ethnogenesis of the Songhay was the consequence of Sonni militancy against Malian authority. It is in the course of their struggle of liberation that the Sonni encouraged oppositional cavalry forces from Zarmaganda and Zarmatarey to abandon their Zarma overlords and to rally behind them instead. Inversely, the ethnogenesis of the Zarma resulted from the defeat of the Zā by the Sonni and the ensuing withdrawal of Mali from the Middle Niger. Therefore, the collapse of Malian overlordship was certainly not the result of direct large-scale confrontation between local and foreign forces, but of an indirect conflict between the Sonni and the local partisans of Mali.

4. Songhay from Sonni 'Alī to Askiya Muhammad

The founder of the Songhay empire and the last effective ruler of the Sonni dynasty was Sonni 'Alī the Great (1465-1492). During his reign, the new Songhay nobility rose to the highest offices of state without fully eclipsing the old Soninke elite. The numerous military expeditions and the incorporation of new provinces into the expanding empire, fostered the integration of Mande and Songhay elements into the ruling class of the new state. Just as the renown of Sonni 'Alī was so remarkable that some twenty years after his death he was still widely remembered

[185] Al-Maghīlī in Hunwick, *Shari'a*, 14/tr. 70.

[186] Soumaila, *Traditions des Songhay*, 20-25.

[187] According to Olivier de Sardan, the traditions of the Zarma are those of the aristocracy and not those of all the people (*Concepts*, 400).

as a great lord,[188] so the people most decisive for his military exploits, the Songhay, provided the name for the new empire.

It has often been assumed that Sonni 'Alī relied on the forces and the traditions of the Songhay, as if the Songhay were a homogeneous ethnic bloc.[189] As a member of the Soninke ruling elite he actually followed the steps of his Sonni and Zā predecessors, and thus could build on the dynastic tradition of Ghana in the first place. A Sonni ruler before him, perhaps Sulaymān Dāma, had been able to dislodge the remnant Mali forces represented by the Zā from Gao. Sonni 'Alī himself disposed of sufficient military strength to expand the limits of the empire from Kebbi in the east to Jenne in the west.[190] Providing the dominant cavalry forces for the Soninke elite of Gao, the Songhay became so influential that by the end of the first decade of the sixteenth century in the western provinces their name was given to the main language of the new empire.[191] By the middle of the seventeenth century, the chroniclers of Timbuktu – again based in the west – applied their name to the hegemony founded by Sonni 'Alī.[192] The same chroniclers were, however, reluctant to project the name into the past beyond the rule of the Sonni. They preferred using the more general term Takrūr instead.[193] Modern

[188] According to Leo Africanus he was "*un gran principe*" (Ramusio, *Discrittione*, 77; Épaulard, *Description*, II, 463). The ms. 954 of Rome omits the passage (Rauchenberger, *Leo der Afrikaner*, 264), but this is obviously due to a mistake of the copy. From this and other instances it can be seen that ms. 954 was not the *Urtext* of Leo's account as Rauchenberger believes (*ibid.*, 148-151) and that Épaulard and others were correct to consider the manuscript 954 to be a copy of the original used by Ramusio (*Description*, I, VII).

[189] Rouch, *Contribution*, 183, 186; Fage, *History*, 80; Levtzion, "Western Maghrib", 428.

[190] Al-Sa'dī, *T. al-Sūdān*, 64/tr. 104-105 (reading *ard Kanta* instead of *ard Kunta*); Ibn al-Mukhtār, *T. al-Fattāsh*, 46/tr. 89. Without textual or other support, some authors believe that the core of Sonni 'Alī's army consisted of a fleet of Sorko fishermen (Rouch, *Contribution*, 183; Levtzion, *Ancient Ghana*, 82, 84-85).

[191] Having travelled to Timbuktu in the years between 1509 and 1514 (Épaulard, *Description*, VII-VIII; Rauchenberger, *Leo der Afrikaner*, 52), Leo Africanus thought that Songhay was not only spoken in Gao, Timbuktu and Jenne, but also in Mali and in Walāta (Épaulard, *Description*, 16, 464).

[192] Al-Sa'dī, *T. al-Sūdān*, 22, 73, 76/tr. 38, 120, 125; Ibn al-Mukhtār, *T. al-Fattāsh*, *11, 44, 46/tr. 13, 83, 89; T. al-Fattāsh (NH), 326-339.* Al-Sa'dī is less strict and uses the ethnonym Songhay occasionally in instances referring to the pre-Songhay period *T. al-Sūdān*, 2, 6, 7, /tr. 3, 12, 14. In his translation Houdas extends the usage of Songhay by calling the Zā "princes of Songhay" (*T. al-Sūdān*, 2/tr. 4).

[193] *T. al-Fattāsh* (NH), 327, 329, 335. With the possible exception of *T. al-Fattāsh*, 29/tr. 49, where the editors however mention a "feuillet isolé du ms. A", Ibn al-Mukhtār does not seem to have used the name Songhay for the earlier period of Gao history (*idem*, 29 n. 1). Al-Sa'dī occasionally does this (*T. al-Sūdān*, 2, 7/tr. 3, 11), although he uses the name mainly as a geographical term (*idem*, 4, 6, 6, 7/tr. 6, 11, 12, 13). Both chroniclers employ the term

scholars introduced the notion that a supposedly homogenous population called Songhay had inhabited the region of the eastern Niger bend from the medieval period onwards.[194]

One of the leading members of the Soninke elite during the reign of Sonni 'Alī was the high-ranking officer Muhammad Tūrē.[195] In 1493, a few months after Sonni 'Alī's death, he seized power after a successful insurrection in the course of which he fought two bloody battles against Abū Bakr Dāo, the newly enthroned son of the great conqueror.[196] Henceforth known as Askiya Muhammad, he became the founder of a dynasty which continued to rule over the country up to the Moroccan conquest towards the end of the sixteenth century.[197] Pursuing the military exploits of his predecessor, he extended the Songhay empire to the whole of Hausaland and Agadez in the east and to Diāra and Galam in the west. In the northeast, he incorporated the copper mines of Takedda into the empire.[198]

On account of his Soninke ancestry, noted by the chroniclers of Timbuktu,[199] some historians depict Askiya Muhammad as an alien usurper seizing power from the Songhay dynasty of the Sonni.[200] This view ignores the fact that all members of the two royal houses, the Zā and the Sonni, were Soninke by origin. Al-Maghīlī and the author of *T. al-Fattāsh* make it clear that Sonni 'Alī and Askiya Muhammad descended from the same Soninke invaders who were supposed to have once subdued the country and introduced Islam.[201] By turning Askiya Muhammad's mother Kassaī into a sister of Sonni 'Alī – although she actually was a daughter of Kūra-Koy Bukar, an official based on an island of

Takrūr in reference to the Mande-Songhay complex (*T. al-Sūdān*, 120/tr. 193; 64/tr. 104-105; *T. al-Fattāsh*, 52, 53, 93/tr. 101, 102, 176).

[194] Delafosse, *Haut-Sénégal*, I, 238-246; Rouch, *Contribution*, 165-176; Trimingham, *History*, 83-84; Fage, *History*, 76-77; Levtzion, "Sahara and Sudan", 677-678; Cuoq, *Histoire*, 131-144; Hunwick, *Timbuktu*, XXV, XXXIV.

[195] Leo Africanus calls him "*capitano di Sorai Heli*" (Ramusio, *Descrittione*, 77; Épaulard, *Description*, 462). See also al-Sa'dī, *T. al-Sūdān*, 61/tr. 117, and Ibn al-Mukhtār, *T. al-Fattāsh*, *46/tr. 88-89*

[196] Al-Sa'dī, *T. al-Sūdān*, 71-72/tr. 117; Ibn al-Mukhtār, *T. al-Fattāsh*, 53/tr. 101-102, 338-339.

[197] The Askiya title appears on two inscriptions of the Iira Kanje cemetery of Old Gao, one of which is dated to 1234 AD (de Moraes Farias, *Inscriptions*, 57-59 [n° 62, 63]; see also §§ 193, 198).

[198] Mauny, *Tableau*, 513-515; Levtzion, "Western Maghrib", 431-434; Hunwick, "Songhay, Borno", 344-346.

[199] Al-Sa'dī, *T. al-Sūdān*, 71/tr. 117; Ibn al-Mukhtār, *T. al-Fattāsh*, 59/tr. 114.

[200] Trimingham, *History*, 97; similarly Fage, *History*, 81, and Hunwick, *Timbuktu*, XL.

[201] Al-Maghīlī in: Hunwick, *Sharī'a*, 13, 17/tr. 69, 72; Ibn al-Mukhtār, *T. al-Fattāsh*, 48/tr. 93-94.

the Niger upstream of Timbuktu – oral traditions even connect the two greatest figures of Songhay history by matrimonial relations.[202] Muḥammad Tūrē was certainly not the only Mande officer in the Songhay army. When referring to an expedition against the Mossi, one of the chroniclers incidentally mentions his father Abū Bakr and his brother 'Umar, the later Kurmina-Fāri, among senior army officers.[203] While Muḥammad Tūrē himself held the title of Tondi-Farma, probably concerned with the provincial government of the Hombori mountains, his brother 'Umar held that of Kutalu-Farma.[204] These examples show that, despite the final eviction of the Zā from Gao at the end of the fourteenth century and the incorporation of Songhay leaders into the military establishment, certain members of the Mande elite continued to hold important positions in the Gao state.

The insurrection led by Muḥammad Tūrē may even be seen in connection with earlier succession conflicts, mentioned by al-Maghīlī, in which Sonni pretenders had to vanquish the opposition of the Songhay warriors before they could fully be installed as kings.[205] The most striking evidence for the continuity between the rule of the Sonni and the Askiya is provided by the pilgrimage of Askiya Muḥammad.[206] If, only three years after his rise to power, the new ruler could afford to be absent from the country for nearly two years, the dynastic overthrow can only have resulted in limited changes within the political structures of the state. Once Abū Bakr Dāo and his closest followers had fled to Aïr,[207] most of the former officials of the Sonni regime must have rallied to the successful challenger.

[202] Rouch, *Contribution*, 187-189; Hama, *Histoire*, 137-140; Soumaila, *Traditions*, 28; Ibn al-Mukhtār, *T. al-Fattāsh*, 59, 78, 81/tr. 114, 148, 151. See also al-Sa'dī, *T. al-Sūdān*, 68/tr. 111.

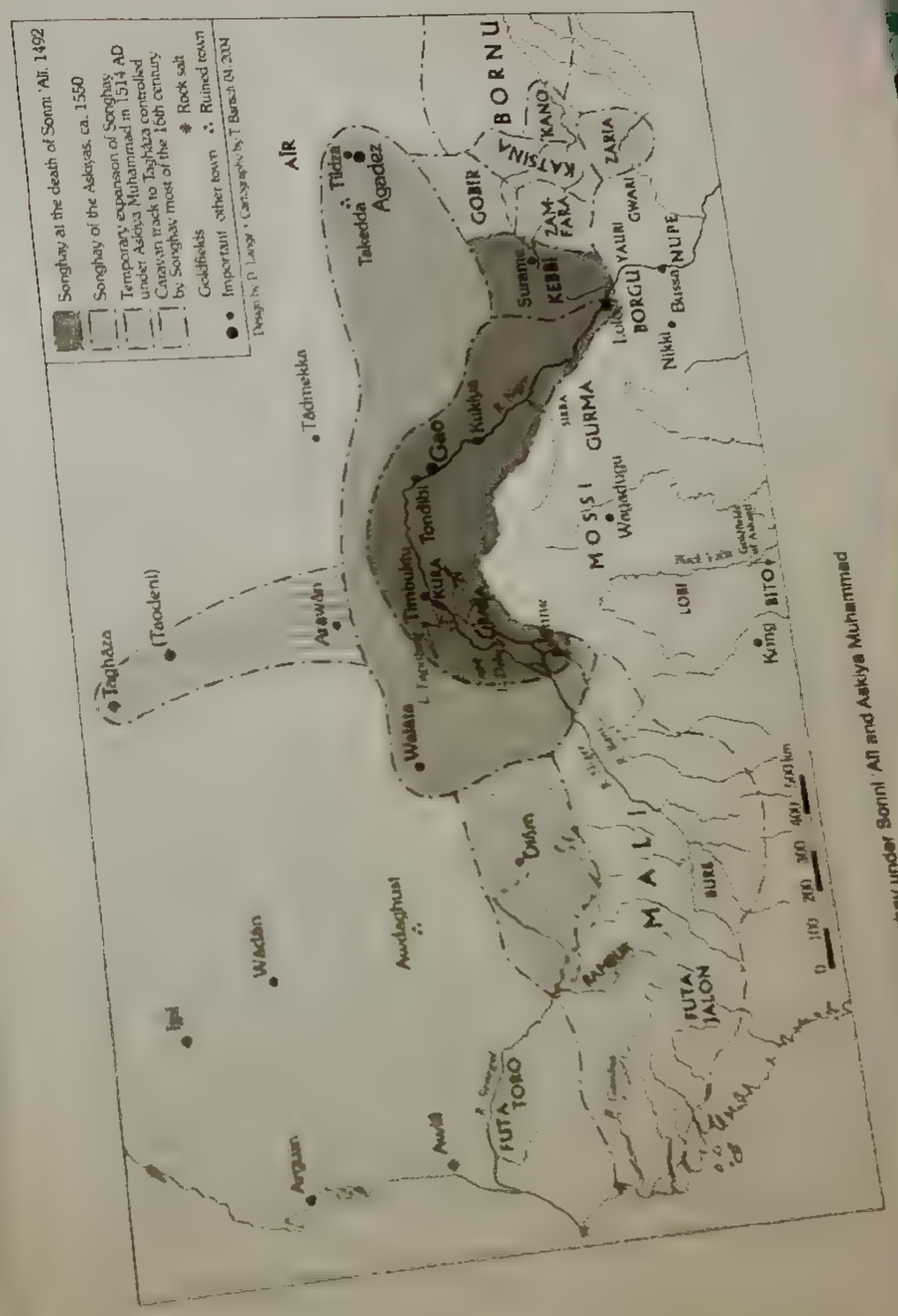
[203] Ibn al-Mukhtār, *T. al-Fattāsh*, 45/tr. 86.

[204] Ibn al-Mukhtār, *T. al-Fattāsh*, 46/tr. 90. For the function of Tondi-Farma, see Hunwick, *Timbuktu*, 344.

[205] Al-Maghīlī *in:* Hunwick, *Shari'a*, 14/tr. 70. Hunwick comes close to this solution, but he adds that Askiya Muḥammad's struggle had a different complexion from that of the Sonni because of his Soninke origin (*Timbuktu*, XL).

[206] Al-Sa'dī, *T. al-Sūdān*, 72-73/tr. 119-121. Leo Africanus (Epaulard, *Description*, II, 463). In the *T. al-Fattāsh* only the recent interpolations of ms C mention the pilgrimage (16-17/tr. 25-27).

[207] Al-Sa'dī, *T. al-Sūdān*, 72/tr. 117; Hunwick, *Timbuktu*, 102 n. 7. In a note to a passage of *T. al-Fattāsh* copied from *T. al-Sūdān*, Delafosse suggests reading Ayorou, a village situated on an island of the Niger between Kukiya-Bentia and Tillabery (Barth, *Travels*, III, 515; Rouch, *Contribution*, 187). However, since this region was certainly controlled by Askiya Muḥammad, a retreat of the defeated king to the Songhay speaking communities of Takedda-Agadez seems to be more likely. The region was overrun by Askiya Muḥammad in 1500 and it was more permanently incorporated into the empire in 1516 (al-Sa'dī, *T. al-Sūdān*, 78/tr. 129; Ibn al-Mukhtār, *T. al-Fattāsh*, 70/tr. 135-136, 339).



The most serious popular objection raised against the Sonni regime was probably related to the never-ending military expeditions of Sonni 'Alī. In contrast, the criticism voiced by the chroniclers against the superficial Islam of Sonni 'Alī was certainly restricted to small circles of devote Muslims among the merchant class in towns like Timbuktu and Jenne.[208] Behind a widespread unwillingness to follow the son of Sonni 'Alī into further military adventures, it is possible to perceive a structural imbalance introduced into the societies of the Middle Niger by the increasing weight of the Songhay warriors. From this point of view, it is not surprising that the successful challenger to the regime rose from among the less bellicose traditional Soninke elite of Gao.

Who were the forces behind the revolt led by the Soninke officer Muhammad Tūrē? Most authors suppose that support for the insurrection came mainly from the western provinces.[209] Looking at the history of Gao from the west, the chroniclers of Timbuktu are indeed only able to mention the Bara-Koy Kūra as being among the followers of Muhammad Tūrē. The prestigious Malian title *mansa*, applied to various Bara-Koys preceding and following him, suggests that he likewise belonged to the Mande section of the imperial ruling class.[210] Probably, the chroniclers were unable to provide the names of further supporters of the revolt because they neither held the offices of governors in the western provinces close to them, nor did they belong to the high-ranking officials of the court. In fact, it is more likely that the majority of military leaders following the call of Muhammad Tūrē were members of the old Soninke elite of Zarmaganda and Zarmatarey, the leaders of the progressively emerging Zarma ethnic group. These partisans committed to political change, were geographically too distant from Timbuktu, and their actions were too limited in time – as we shall see – to raise the attention of the chroniclers.[211] Any regime based on Songhay support must have been highly suspect to them, whatever its other merits might have been. By contributing to the success of a revolt against the Sonni regime, they probably expected to regain their former leading positions in Gao.

During the first decade of Askiya Muhammad's rule, the Zā of the eastern provinces of the Gao kingdom seem to have once more assumed high-ranking positions in the Gao state. Their temporarily influential roles can be deduced

[208] Al-Sa'dī, *T. al-Sūdān*, 72/tr. 118; Ibn al-Mukhtār, *T. al-Fattāsh*, 59/tr. 115.

[209] Levtzion, "Western Maghrib", 427-428; Hunwick, *Shari'a*, 22; similarly Rouch, *Contribution*, 187.

[210] Ibn al-Mukhtār, *T. al-Fattāsh*, 53/tr. 102. The Songhay title *koy* "lord, ruler" corresponds to a Songhay translation of the Mande title *mansa* held also by later governors of the Bara province (*T. al-Fattāsh*, 81/tr. 152-153). Hunwick suggests that the holders of the title were themselves of Manding origin (*Timbuktu*, 339).

[211] The Zarma are only mentioned by the "Notice historique" of the *T. al-Fattāsh*, 334.

from the *Zā-bēr-banda* incident in the war against Borgu in 1505. At this turning point of Songhay history, Askiya Muhammad decided to get rid of the enigmatic *Zā-bēr-banda* by making them cannon-fodder in a battle from which they could not escape. When 'Umar Komdiakha complained to his brother about the massacre, it was answered that only through the elimination of these brave warriors had it been possible to guarantee the survival of Songhay.[212] As for the identification of the *Zā-bēr-banda*, one of our sources clearly states that they were descendants of the Zā dynasty, while this source at the same time rejects the erroneous tendency to apply this name to the Sonni.[213] Although such confusion is understandable on account of the genealogical closeness of the two dynasties, historians should refrain from committing the same mistake.[214] By distinguishing sharply between the Songhay and the Zā and insisting on the importance of eliminating the latter from Songhay history, al-Sa'dī highlights a crucial event which ended the long conflict-stricken relationship between the Sonni/Songhay and the Zā/Zarma. After the Borgu war, Askiya Muhammad pursued the same ethnic policies as his Sonni predecessors. Therefore, neither the change of dynastic title, nor a more favourable approach to Islam, conceals the fact that the Askiya regime had, by the brutal eviction of the Soninke, become Songhay in the same sense as the preceding rule of the Sonni had been.

5. Further Developments and Conclusion

Under the rule of the descendants of Askiya Muhammad, the history of Songhay was characterized by numerous court intrigues and succession disputes. Only exceptional rulers like Askiya Ishāq I and Askiya Dawūd were able to lead far-reaching expeditions to Hausaland, to central Mali and against the Mossi.[215] Moreover, the Askiyas made few attempts to integrate conquered territories: distant kingdoms like those of Hausaland or the Malian principalities merely delivered tributes, while closer districts like those of the western Niger bend and the

[212] Al-Sa'dī, *T. al-Sūdān*, 76/tr. 125.

[213] Ibn al-Mukhtār, *T. al-Fattāsh* (NH), 333-334.

[214] Delafosse identified the *Zā-bēr-banda* first as Zaberma, i.e. Zarma, and later as "descendants of *Zā-bēr* 'the great Zā'", i.e. the Zā (*Haut-Sénégal*, I, 245; *T. al-Fattāsh* (NH), 333 n. 4); similarly Trimingham, *History*, 91 n. 4; Gado, *Zarmataray*, 13-14, 163, and Lange, "Rois de Gao-Sané", 272, "From Mande", 28", 299-300. Hunwick dismisses a survival of the descendants of the Zā in the sixteenth century and therefore turns the *Zā-bēr-banda*, irrespective of the remark in the "notice historique" of *T. al-Fattāsh*, into members of the Sonni 'Alī clan (*Timbuktu*, XXXVII n. 56).

[215] Rouch, *Contribution*, 200-201; Levtzion, *Ancient Ghana*, 87-91; Hunwick, "Songhay, Borno", 346-352.

Hombori and Bandiagara mountains were more tightly controlled by permanent governors. Apart from the most distant countries, all districts provided troops for military expeditions. However, once campaigns came to a standstill, ties between communities of the periphery and the centre began to loosen and finally broke. The Zarma countries in the southeast are particularly significant. Since apparently no provincial governor of Gao was stationed in Zarmaganda or Zarmatarey, the administrative status of the Songhay-speaking Zarma was the same as that of linguistically distinct people. But, if even the resources of neighbouring and ethnically related communities were only drawn upon slightly, what about societies with different cultures and histories?

Dynastic instability was the other great structural weakness of the Songhay empire. Beginning with Askiya Muḥammad, rulers promoted their brothers and sons to the most important offices of the state. Only a few positions like those of Hi-Koy, Hugu-Kory-Koy and Bāray-Koy were reserved for royal functionaries. Yet, the authority of these palace officials was too limited to counterbalance the weight of the Askiya princes. The outcome of the succession contests was therefore not decided by the state officials but by rival factions among the members of the royal family. Although all nine rulers who came to power during the period of the Askiyas belonged to the family of Askiya Muḥammad, the great number of ambitious princes and internal dissension among them made consequential and sustained governmental action difficult. When in 1591 the Moroccan ruler Mawlay Aḥmad launched a small expeditionary force equipped with firearms across the Sahara for the specific purpose of conquering Songhay, Askiya Isḥāq II was unable to organize any efficient resistance. The result was the devastating defeat at Tondibi, which did not only end the rule of the Askiya dynasty, but also ruined the great medieval tradition of statehood on the Middle Niger. On a limited scale, the Askiyas of Dendi continued to oppose the foreign invaders by tenacious resistance, yet in the long run they could ensure dynastic continuity only on a village level, while central institutions of the former state collapsed.[216]

Some evidence of the dynastic history of Songhay can be deduced from the surviving forms of chiefly rule among the different Songhay-speaking people. The Songhay strictly speaking live downstream from Kukiya and are dominated by a village aristocracy descended from Askiya Muḥammad.[217] In most regions of Songhay proper their authority extends over isolated families of magicians,

[216] Levtzion, "Western Maghrib", 427-46; Hunwick, "Songhay, Borno", 348-352, 360-368.

[217] Hama, *Histoire*, 104; Olivier de Sardan, *Concepts*, 285. For a map of the present distribution of the (southern) Songhay-speaking groups, see above map 11 p. 521.

the Sohance, claiming descent from the Sonni 'Alī or other Sonni rulers.[218] Downstream beyond the Zarma, we find in Dendi those Songhay who retreated from the area of conflict with Moroccan troops to safer regions in the south. Petty kings here likewise claim descent from Askiya Muḥammad.[219] Finally, there are the Songhay-Arma living upstream from Kukiya whose village nobility, the Arma, trace their ancestry to the Moroccan conquerors of Songhay.[220]

The people of Zarmaganda and Zarmatarey, on the other hand, were hardly affected by the collapse of the Songhay state, since the process of localization through which the ruling Zā established themselves among the subordinate people began much earlier and was more intensive. No doubt, this rapprochment between the Soninke aristocracy and the local commoners provided the basis for the ethnogenesis of the Zarma. Although smaller and older ethnic groups – the Cii, Kumlaamey, Deriye, Hiibi and also the Lafar, Sabiri, Golle, Wazi and Kalle[221] – are still recognisable, the Zarma, whose ancestors came on the flying base of a granary, constitute the most numerous and the most homogeneous ethnic unit among Songhay-speaking people.[222] Others call them by a single common name with slight variations, while they themselves feel bound to each other by strong ties of ethnic solidarity.[223] The situation is quite different for the various groups of Songhay – among them the Sorko, Gow, Kaado, Wogo, Kurtey and Sohance[224] – who hardly know their common name and who do not feel part of a wider ethnic community.[225]

Looking back at the long history of the Middle Niger, the present contrast between the Zarma and the Songhay shows a final confirmation of the importance of the Mande factor in past developments of the region. After the long domination of the Soninke nobility in Gao, resulting from the expansion of Ghana and Mali, the Zā withdrew from the Gao state, joined their kinsmen in the provinces and established themselves in the eastern and southeastern districts of the king-

[218] Rouch, *Contribution*, 281-297; Olivier de Sardan, *Concepts*, 335-339.

[219] Ardant du Picq, *Population africaine*, 51-51; Urvoy, *Histoire*, 64-70; Olivier de Sardan, *Concepts*, 112-113.

[220] Abitbol, *Tombouctou*, 151-163; Olivier de Sardan, *Concepts*, 35-36.

[221] Hama, *Histoire*, 6-34; Gado, *Zarmatarey*, 280-287; Olivier de Sardan, *Concepts*, 409-410.

[222] According to demographic estimations of the colonial period, the Zarma are nearly as numerous as all other Songhay-speaking groups put together (Rouch, *Songhay*, 5-8). On the spread of the ruling group in Zarmaganda and Zarmatarey see Olivier de Sardan, *Sociétés*, 21-23.

[223] Gado, *Zarmatarey*, 130-131; Olivier de Sardan, *Concepts*, 406-408; Pilaszewicz, *Zabarmawa conquest*, 19.

[224] Rouch, *Songhay*, 3-5; Olivier de Sardan, *Concepts*, 166-168, 235-239, 271-273, 339-344, 390-394.

[225] Olivier de Sardan, *Concepts*, 339-340, 406-412; id., *Sociétés*, 25.

dom as a persevering village aristocracy. Imposing their authority and their own Mande traditions on local communities and thus giving rise to the Zarma, they proved in the long run to be the most resistant and united of all Songhay-speaking groups. By contrast, the two later Soninke ruling houses, the Sonni and the Askiya, who had tried to use fragmented Songhay warrior groups to their own ends, finally failed to lay the foundations for a long-lasting and united grass-roots power: neither did they impose on their subject communities the specific label of their Mande identity, nor did they derive from their state experience a powerful tradition that served as a binding oral charter for overall ethnic solidarity.

The Songhay on the other hand were more successful in imposing their ethnic label. Having emerged into the light of history as a consequence of their resistance to eastward-expanding Soninke overlords, they rose to power on the Middle Niger by giving support to the Mande minority faction of the Sonni. Enabling the Sonni to throw off Mali domination, the Songhay were about to cut the latter off from their Mande roots and absorb them entirely into local culture. However, this process was interrupted by the rival Soninke dynasty of the Askiya, which split the Songhay into two sections and thus dissipated their energies. In the end they all fell victim to the better-armed and more aggressive Moroccan invaders. Nevertheless, Moroccan domination did not last, and subsequently the Songhay fully absorbed their former Soninke overlords into their ethnic mould. If not for the rediscovery of the tombstones of Gao-Saney, the critical analysis of the *Ta'rikhs*, and the evidence derived from Zarma traditions, all the credit for the great achievements of the medieval Gao state would have gone to the Songhay alone.

Bibliography

Abitbol, M., *Tombouctou et les Arma*, Paris 1979.

Alojaly, Gh., *Lexique-Touareg-Français*, Copenhague 1980.

Ardant du Picq, *Une population africaine: les Dyerma*, Paris 1933.

Austen, R., *African Economic History*, London 1987.

Barth, H., *Travels and Discoveries in North and Central Africa*, 3 vols., New York 1857-1859.

Bello, M., *Infāq al-maysūr*, ed. A. M. Gummi, Cairo 1964; transl. E. J. Arnett, *The Rise of the Sokoto Fulani*, Kano 1922.

Bernus, E., *Les Touaregs nigériens. Unité culturelle et diversité régionale d'un peuple pasteur*, Paris 1981.

Bernus, E. and S., *Du sel et des dattes: Introduction à l'étude de la communauté d'In Gall et de Tegidda-n-tesemt*, Niamey 1972.

Besmer, F. E., *Horses, Musicians, and Gods: The Hausa Cult of Spirit Possession-Trance*, South Hadley, Mass. 1983.

Binger, L. G., *Du Niger au golfe de Guinée par le pays de Kong*, 2 vols., Paris 1892.

Bosch Vilá, J., *Los Almorávides*, Tétouan 1956.

Bovill, E. W., *The Golden Trade of the Moors*, 2nd ed., London 1968.

Brooks, G. E., *Landlords and Strangers: Ecology, Society and Trade in Western Africa, 1000-1630*, Boulder 1994.

Bucaille, R., "Takeddâ, pays du cuivre", *Bulletin de l'IFAN*, B, 37 (1975), 719-778.

Bulliet, W., *The Camel and the Wheel*, New York 1975.

Cancel, Lt., "Étude sur le dialecte de Tabelbala", *Revue Africaine* 52 (1908), 302-345.

Cuoq, J., *Recueil des sources arabes concernant l'Afrique occidentale du VIIIème au XVIème siècle*, Paris 1975.

Histoire de l'islamisation de l'Afrique de l'Ouest des origines à la fin du XVIe siècle, Paris 1984.

Delafosse, M., *Haut-Sénégal-Niger*, 3 vols., Paris 1912.

Dembélé, M. and M. Raimbault, "La problématique de la nature des buttes", *in:* Raimbault/Sanogo (eds.), *Recherches archéologiques*.

Desplagnes, L., *Le plateau central nigérien*, Paris 1907.

Devisse, J., "Routes de commerce et échanges en Afrique occidentale en relation avec la Méditerranée", *Revue d'Histoire Économique et Sociale* 50 (1972), 42-73.

"L'Or", *in:* J. Devisse (ed.), *Vallées du Niger*, Paris 1993, 344-357.

Fage, J. D., *A History of Africa*, London 1978.

Flight, C., "The medieval cemetery at Saney: A history of the site from 1939 to 1950", *in:* J. Devisse (ed.), *Le sol, la parole et l'écrit. Mélanges Raymond Mauny*, 2 vols., Paris 1981, 91-107.

FN 96, 97: Field notes D. Lange from the years 1996 and 1997.

Gado, B., *Le Zarmatarey. Contribution à l'histoire des populations d'entre Niger et Dallol Mawri*, Niamey 1980.

Garrad, T., "Myth and metrology: The early trans-Saharan gold trade", *Journal of African History* 23 (1982), 443-461.

Hopkins, A. G., *An Economic History of West Africa*, London 1973.

Gironcourt, G. de, *Missions de Gironcourt en Afrique occidentale, 1908-9, 1911-12. Documents scientifique*, Paris 1920.

Hadj-Sadok, M., "*K. al-dja'râfiyya*", *in:* *Bulletin d'Études Orientales* 21 (1968), 9-437.

Hama, B., *Histoire traditionnelle d'un peuple: les Zarma-Songhay*, Paris 1967.

Hamani, Dj., *Au carrefour du Soudan et de la Berbérie: le sultanat touareg de l'Aïr*, Niamey 1989.

Hodgkin, Th., *Nigerian Perspectives. An Historical Anthology*, 2nd ed., London 1975.

Hunwick, J., "Gao and the Almoravids: a hypothesis", *in:* B. Swartz and R. Dumett (eds.), *West African Culture Dynamics*, The Hague 1980, 413-430.

- "Songhay, Bornu and the Hausa states, 1450-1600", *in:* J. Ajayi and M. Crowder (eds.), *History of West Africa*, vol. I, 3rd ed., London 1985, 323-371.
- *Sharī'a in Songhay: The Replies of al-Maghilī to the Questions of Askia al-Hājj Muhammad*, Oxford 1985.
- "Gao and the Almoravids revisited: Ethnicity, political change and the limits of interpretation", *Journal of African History* 35 (1994), 251-273.
- *Timbuktu and the Songhay Empire: Al-Sa'dī's Ta'rīkh al-Sūdān down to 1613 and other Contemporary Documents*, Leiden 1999.

Ibn al-Mukhtār/Mahmūd Ka'tī, *Ta'rīkh al-Fattāsh*, ed. and transl. by O. Houdas and M. Delafosse, Paris 1913.

Insoll, T., *Islam, Archaeology and History: Gao Region (Mali) ca. 900-1250*, Oxford 1996.
- "Iron Age Gao: An archaeological contribution", *Journal of African History* 38 (1997), 1-30.

Johnson, J. W., *The Epic of Son-Jara: A West African Tradition*, Bloomington 1986.

Karimou, M., *Tradition orale et histoire: Les Mawri Zarmaphones des origines à 1898*, Niamey 1977.

Kiéthéga, J.-B., *L'or de la Volta Noire*, Paris 1983.

Lange, D., "Das frühe Kebbi und Mali: Versuch einer historischen Interpretation der Kanta-Traditionen", *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 141 (1991), 139-166.
- "Das alte Mali und Ghana: Die Kritik einer historiographischen Fiktion", *Historische Zeitschrift* 255 (1992), 587-623.
- "Les rois de Gao-Sané et les Almoravides", *Journal of African History* 32 (1991), 251-275.
- "Ethnogenesis from within the Chadic state. Some thoughts on the history of Kanem-Borno", *Paideuma* 19 (1993), 261-277.
- "Der Ursprung des westafrikanischen Wettergottes Schango", *Saeculum* 45 (1994), 213-238.
- "From Mande to Songhay: towards a political and ethnic history of medieval Gao", *Journal of African History* 35 (1994), 275-301.
- "The pre-Islamic dimension of Hausa history", *Saeculum* 46 (1995), 161-203.
- "La chute de la dynastie des Sissé: Considérations sur la dislocation de l'empire du Ghana à partir de l'histoire de Gao", *History in Africa* 23 (1996), 155-178.
- "The Almoravid expansion and the downfall of Ghana", *Der Islam* 73 (1996), 313-351.
- "Not yet Songhay", *Orientalische Literaturzeitung* 99, 2 (2004), 145-154.

Last, M., *The Sokoto Caliphate*, London 1967.

Leo Africanus, "Discrittione dell'Africa", *in:* G. B. Ramusio (ed.), *Navigationi e viaggi*, vol. I Venice 1550; French transl. A. Épaulard, *Description de l'Afrique*, 2 vols., Paris 1956; text and German transl. see Rauchenberger, *Leo der Afrikaner*.

Levtzion, N., *Ancient Ghana and Mali*, London 1973.
- "The Sahara and the Sudan from the Arab conquest of the Maghrib to the rise of the Almoravids", *in:* J. D. Fage (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Africa. Vol. II: From c. 500 BC to AD 1050*, Cambridge 1978, 637-684.
- "The western Maghrib and Sudan", *in:* R. Oliver (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Africa. Vol. III: From c. 1050 to c. 1600*, Cambridge 1977, 331-462.

Levtzion, N. and J. Hopkins (transl.), *Corpus of Early Arabic Sources for West African History*, Cambridge 1981.

Lhote, H., "Contribution à l'étude des Touaregs soudanais", *Bulletin de l'IFAN*, B, 27 (1955), 334-370.

Lovejoy, P., "The role of the Wangara in the economic transformation of the Central Sudan in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries", *Journal of African History* 19 (1978), 173-193.

Marty, P., *Études sur l'Islam et les tribus du Soudan*, 2 vols., Paris 1920.

Mauny, R., *Tableau géographique de l'ouest africain*, Dakar 1961.
- *Siècles obscurs de l'Afrique Noire*, Paris 1970.

Monteil, Ch., "Les Empires du Mali", *Bulletin du Comité d'Études Historiques et Scientifiques de l'AOF* 12 (1928), 291-447.
- "La légende du Ouagadou et l'origine des Soninké", in: *Mélanges ethnologiques*, Dakar 1953, 361-408.

Moraes Farias, P. F. de, "Du nouveau sur les stèles de Gao: Les épitaphes du prince Yāmā Kūrī et du roi Fa.dā (XIIIe siècle), *Bulletin de l'IFAN*, B, 36 (1974), 511-524.
- *Arabic Medieval Inscriptions from the Republic of Mali: Epigraphy, Chronicles, and Songhay-Tuāreg History*, Oxford 2003.

Mounkaïla, F., *Mythe et histoire dans la geste de Zaberkane*, Niamey 1988.

Niane, D. T., *Soundjata ou l'épopée mandingue*, Paris 1960.

Nicolaï, R., *Les dialectes du songhay. Contribution à l'étude des changements linguistiques*, Paris 1981.
- *La force des choses ou l'épreuve nilo-saharienne*, Köln 2003.

Norris, H. T., *The Tuaregs: Their Islamic Legacy and Its Diffusion in the Sahel*, Warminster 1975.
- *The Arab Conquest of the Western Sahara*, Harlow 1986.

Olivier de Sardan, J.-P., *Concepts et conceptions songhay-zarma*, Paris 1982.
- *Les sociétés songhay-zarma (Niger-Mali)*, Paris 1984.

Pâques, V., "L'estrade royale des Niaré", *Bulletin de l'IFAN*, B, 15 (1953), 1642-1654.

Pilaszewicz, S., *Zabarmawa Conquest of North-West Ghana and Upper Volta*, Warsaw 1992.

Piault, M.-H., *Histoire touarègue. Introduction à l'étude de processus constitutifs d'un État*, Paris 1970.

Poncet, Y., et al., *La région d'In Gall – Tegiddan Tesemt (Niger): Programme archéologique d'urgence, 1977-1981*, Niamey 1983.

Prost, A., *La langue Soňay et ses dialectes*, Dakar 1956.

Raimbault, M. and K. Sanogo, "Problématique de la nature des buttes", *in:* Raimbault/Sanogo (eds.), *Recherches archéologiques.*

_ (eds.), *Recherches archéologiques au Mali*, Paris 1991, 249-258.

Rauchenberger, D., *Johannes Leo der Afrikaner. Seine Beschreibung des Raumes zwischen Nil und Niger nach dem Urtext*, Wiesbaden 1999.

Rouch, J., "Les Sorkawa pêcheurs itinérants du Moyen Niger", *Africa* 20 (1950), 5-24.

- *Contribution à l'histoire du Songhay*, Paris 1953.

- *Les Songhay*, Paris 1954.

- *Religion et magie songhay*, Paris 1960.

Al-Sa'dī, 'Abd al-Rahmān, *Tarikh al-Sūdān*, ed. and transl. by O. Houdas, Paris 1898-1900.

Sauvaget, J., "Notes préliminaires sur les épitaphes royales de Gao", *Revue des Études Islamiques* 1948, 5-12.

- "Les épitaphes royales de Gao", *in: Bulletin de l'IFAN*, B, 12 (1950), 418-440.

Shaw, Th., *Nigeria - Its Archaeology and Early History*, London 1978.

Soumaila, H., M. Hamidou and D. Laya, *Traditions des Songhay de Tera (Niger)*, Paris 1998.

Trimingham, S., *A History of Islam in West Africa*, London 1962.

Urvoy, Y., *Historie des populations du Soudan central*, Paris 1936.

Viré, M. M., "Note sur trois epitaphes royales de Gao", *Bulletin de l'IFAN*, B, 20 (1958), 368-376.

- "Steles funéraires musulmanes soudano-sahariennes", *Bulletin de l'IFAN*, B, 20 (1959), 459-500.

ADDENDA ET CORRIGENDA

Section One: The Central Saharan Route

The first three articles are the result of an expedition through the Sahara organized by my late friend Dr. Silvio Berthoud. Starting with two four-wheel drive cars from Geneva, we travelled through Tunisia to Libya and reached Fezzan at the beginning of November 1976. By that time our crossing of the Sahara was more of an adventure than a scientific expedition. We therefore did not try to get proper research clearances for Libya and northeastern Niger. The main aim of the expedition was to reach the other side of the Sahara and to start research in Bornu. In Kawar we were however struck by the many unrecorded archaeological sites. It was only later that we realized that, due to difficult access, the southern Fezzan, and the trans-Saharan route itself, are up to the present day largely understudied areas.

To Article I (1977b: "Qasaba")

The article was written immediately after the desert crossing during a two-weeks stay in Zinder with little literature at our disposal. Some additional information may help bring the results of the trip into better perspective. In Fezzan we visited the remnants of the earthern ramparts of a Kanuri fortification called Ganderma near Trāghen (photo n° 7), saw a number of abandoned wells with Kanuri names and noticed that the grave of Mai Idris b. Alī (died 1697) was still a place of worship (1981: 681).[1] We did not try to visit the tombs of the Bornoan governors mentioned by nineteenth-century travellers.[2]

At Qatrūn elderly inhabitants led me to the castle of Mbile situated 5 km north-north-east of the town. Located on the eastern side of the oasis, the castle is hidden from the view of travellers using the route on the western side between

1 Nachtigal mentions 13 Kanuri names and their meanings (*Sahara*, I, 165 n.). Rohlfs thinks that Kanuri was in Fezzan the most widely spoken language in his time (*Reise*, I, 9).

2 Beurmann see Francomic. *Beurmann*, 118. Rohlfs mentions a number of thirty to forty graves (*Quer*, reed. 1984, I.30).

the oasis and the sands of the Edeyen of Murzuq. The solid but irregular construction of the castle is indicative of Sudanic workmanship (photo n° 5), an impression confirmed by oral traditions. There are good reasons for believing that Ganderma near Trāghen was the centre of Kanuri power in Fezzan since the eleventh century (1977a: 67). The Chadic state continued to exercise some authority over Fezzan until 1574 when the Ottoman Turks invaded Fezzan and occupied the oasis (1987a: 117-118). Apparently they expelled the Kanuri representatives from the Chadic state, because, in a letter of protest sent by Idrīs Alawma to Constantinople, the king refers to the seizure of *Qal'at Fezzān*.[3] This fortress of Fezzan could have been either Ganderma or Mbile. A number of other fortresses of unknown age in the oasis between Qatrūn and Tedjerhe are also not yet properly documented.[4]

South of Fezzan, we followed a track fully open to traffic. On our trip from Tejerhe to Aney we met about ten single lorries, and on the return trip a year later, when I was alone, it was about the same. The traffic consisted exclusively of Libyan trucks from Sebha heading for Agadez or Kano. Whenever the direct route to Ngigmi is used, two four-wheel drive vehicles travel together. For this southern end of the ancient central Saharan route a special permit is required which we made no attempt to get. In those years private cars hardly took the Murzuq-Dirku route, as Libya did not attract many tourists. For me it was the reverse. For the return trip in summer 1977, I was obliged to travel once more with my Landrover on the Agadez-Dirku-Murzuq route because of visa problems with the Algerian authorities.

On the trade route to Kanem-Bornu, the discovery of archaeological remains attributed to the Romans bears witness to Roman penetration further south than hitherto supposed. Some authors suggest that the structure of a number of castles in southern Fezzan is patterned on Roman and Byzantine castles further north.[5] In 1866 Rohlfs found a broken marble column about six metres long which he first attributed to the Garamantes and later to the Romans at the well of Meshru 90 km south of Fezzan.[6] In 1931 French colonial officials discovered the ruins of an ancient rectangular structure of squared stone, likewise believed to have been

[3] Martin, "Mai Idrīs", 475, 477.

[4] Near Qatrūn: Tendérbé, Qasr Awlād 'Āmir (Nachtigal: Qasr Uled 'Ammi), Qasr Kimbé (comp. Kan. *kimé* – red; Nachtigal: Qasr Kimba), Jimbrām/Serendibé (Nachtigal: Serendibé). Máriami; near Medrūsa: Dagāmshellu, Djéremé (Nachtigal: Kidde), Wādi Bishli, Kasrāwa/Gazrāwa (Rohlfs: Kasaráua), near Tedjerhe: Qasr Hawā' (Arab.), Tugifra (Teda)/Tugu Fràoma (Kan.; Nachtigal), Būma, Harbi/Hirbi, Dédeisa (FN76, 23r-24v).

[5] Chapelle, *Nomades*, 29; Weiss, "Bornustraße", 452; Ruprechtsberger, *Garamanten*, 77. Ruprechtsberger and Ziegert pers. comm.

[6] Rohlfs, *Reise*, I, 16; *Quer*, reed. 1984, 144; Debetz in: *Rohlfs*, II, 199.

Roman, at Taradjihida 300 km south of Fezzan and 3,5 km to the west of the well of Madema. Other findings include a sword with a broad blade and fine green beads. The latter discovery is confirmed by Chapelle who mentions a rectangular stone structure and ancient blue pearls found at Tarajigida near Madema on the old caravan route.[7] Although no archaeological research has yet been undertaken in al-Qaṣaba/Guezebi, the main archaeological site of Kawar, these elements give further support to the idea that the central Saharan trade route from Tripoli to Lake Chad was – since classical times – one of the most active lines of communication between sub-Saharan Africa and the outside world.

To Article II (1983: "Alun du Kawar")

More detailed studies of the alum of Kawar confirmed that pure alum is found in that oasis. The chemical composition of another four samples of alum from the site north of Bilma largely confirms the data of the analysis of 1977 (1982: 23 n. 14). Further alum deposits are likely to have existed in northern Kawar in the form of numerous *Quellhügel* (source-hills). But owing to the continuous action of sand the original composition of the minerals is no longer detectable. The analysis of mineral samples from the north of Kawar, likewise termed *kalnu sheb*, revealed that they were actually natron (1991c: 228-229). With respect to the economical significance of alum exports from Kawar during the time of the Crusades, Cahen points out that alum from Kawar was an article of trade which the Egyptian authorities supplied to the Christian merchants on a contractual basis. In exchange for this and other articles, Saladin obtained wood for his fleet and weapons to use against the crusaders.[8]

To Article III (1984b : "Notes sur le Kawar")

This modest note was written during my stay in the Niger Republic – where I taught African and Islamic history at the University of Niamey from 1980 to 1985 – at the request of the editors of *Mu Kara Sani* (Institut de Recherches en Science Humaines). It draws attention to a number of medieval sites in order to encourage historical archaeology. In his comprehensive study on the Kawar oasis, Knut Vikør assumes likewise that salt production preceded the trans-Saharan trade.[9] With respect to individual sites in Kawar, Vikør makes the interesting point that, according to Ibn Sa'īd, Qasr Umm Isā did not correspond to

[7] Debetz in: *Rohlfs*, II, 204 n. 174; Chapelle, *Nomades*, 30, 246.

[8] Cahen, *Orient*, 146.

[9] Vikør, *Oasis*, 141-142, 147.

Dirku, as the reading of al-Idrīsī suggests, but to Jado. The text of Ibn Saʿīd says *min mudunihim al-madhkūra ʿala al-Jāda Qaṣr Umm ʿIsā* "of their towns above mentioned is in Jado Qaṣr ʿĪsā".[10] A location four days northwest of al-Qaṣaba corresponds well to the distance of 200 km between al-Qaṣaba and Jado and to the north-northwestern direction. This marginal situation with respect to the main north-south trade on the route from Fezzan to Kawar explains well the survival of a Christian community there until the thirteenth century. Furthermore, archaeological research has recently revealed the existence of a Christian chapel in Jado.[11] The settlement probably received its name from Jādū in Jabal Nafūsa, south of Tripoli, which was formerly likewise a Christian town. Its foundation cannot have been later than the Arab conquest of north Africa and it most likely preceded the Christianisation of Fezzan in 569 (see above p. 284).

Section Two: Kanem-Bornu

The historiography of Kanem-Bornu has made little progress in the last twenty years. My own interest in the history of the Chadic state was aroused in 1967 when in the course of a year of travel in Africa I stayed for two months in Maiduguri. Here I had the good fortune to meet David Spain, a student of Ronald Cohen, who first drew my attention to the neglected history of Bornu. Having resumed my studies in Paris in 1968, Kanem-Bornu appeared an attractive and feasible topic to me because of its long documented history. My first attempts to collect new data were therefore directed towards written sources available in Europe: consular reports from Tripoli, geographical literature, and first hand versions of Arabic chronicles (1972a: 277-90; 1972b: 299-351; 1977a: 15-82; 1981: 673-84. In 1970 I met Eike Haberland in Paris who oriented me towards the possibility of research grants from the *Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft* (DFG). Having completed my PhD (1974) on the basis of a neglected version of the *Diwân salatîn Barnû* preserved in Halle (GDR) – which in those days was generously sent to me via a French cover name – I was able to obtain with the help of Haberland a grant from the DFG to work on Arab geographers in Egypt (1979b: 187-209; 1980: 149-181). During my stay in Cairo from 1974 to 1980 – interrupted by the one-year Fezzan-Bornu expedition – I continued to improve on my knowledge of Arabic. The main aim of my research in Bornu, likewise sponsored by the DFG, was the edition of Ibn Furṭū's *K. ghazawât Barnû* on the basis of the identification of settlements, localities, and ethnic groups. A by-product involved the exploration of the central-Saharan route from Fezzan to Kawar. Over the

[10] Vikør, *Oasis*, 168-169, 298-299.
[11] George/Ziegert, "Zitadelle", 153-182.

years, discussions with John Lavers, first in Paris and later in Kano, continuously fired my interest in the history of Kanem-Bornu. In Cairo and Bonn, Werner Schwarz gave me invaluable methodological advice for work on Arabic texts. Without the practical support of Norbert Cyffer, then based in Maiduguri, the lengthy fieldwork in Borno would not have been feasible (1979a; 1987a). During a temporary stay in Paris I met Djibo Hamani and Boubé Gado who invited me to teach African and Islamic history at the University of Niamey.

To Article IV (1978a : "Progrès de l'Islam")

The historiography of the Chadic state was for a long time overshadowed by the question of the origin of the Kanem-Bornu kings. According to the traditional view, the Sefuwa ruled over Kanem-Bornu from the beginning to 1846. In line with this opinion, Humē, the first Muslim king, was thought to have been a convert. On the basis of earlier critical studies of texts, I tried to show that the rulers of Kanem belonged to a ruling group called Zaghāwa by the external, and Duguwa by the internal sources. Although this group was strongly attached to divine kingship, its last two rulers were Muslims. Duguwa rule was brought to an end by Humē, a Muslim by birth, who founded the Sefuwa dynasty. What was the ethnic identity of Humē? Since the Sefuwa story of origin, referring to the Yemenite hero Sayf b. Dhī Yazan as an eponymic ancestor, seemed to build on a racist Arabic oral narrative, I suggested that he belonged to the Berber milieu of slave traders. Reluctant to promote the rapid spread of Islam, the new rulers were supposed to have continued to thrive on an internal recruitment of slaves (1978a: 506-511).[12]

This reconstruction remains valid insofar as it distinguishes between two ruling groups, the Duguwa and the Sefuwa, it associates the Duguwa with the Zaghāwa, and it postulates that the Duguwa were no heathens *per se*. It is faulty with respect to the Berber and foreign origin of Humē. In fact, the determination of Humē's origin on the basis of the supposed spread of an Arab oral account is highly speculative. It neglects the inclination of Sudanic legends towards Yemenite origins and it ignores the difficult transformation of divine kingships into Islamic states. From a number of other considerations it now appears that Sayf b. Dhī Yazan was chosen as an eponymic ancestor on the basis of homonymous names and not because of the adoption of an alien oral narrative. The existence of the royal

[12] Zeltner, Cuoq and Hickert follow these propositions to a large extent (Tubu, 29-45; Hausaire, 234-240; Cuoq, 104-105). Barkindo and Vikør object to the Berber origin of Humē ("Early states", 226-235; Oasis, 176). See also the modifications to my contribution in the UNESCO history of Africa vol. III by Barkindo (Lange, 1987c: 456, 458-459).

Magumi clan composed of Duguwa and Sefuwa lineages, and the present-day distinction between the Magumi Duguwa and the Magumi Sefuwa, bear witness to a certain degree of governmental continuity beyond the Duguwa-Sefuwa cleavage.[13] Furthermore, the comeback of the Zaghāwa/Zaghāy to power in the fourteenth century shows that the two ruling groups can neither be conceived as dynasties nor as ethnic groups (1993a: 271; 1993b: 52). In all likelihood, they were clan-families assuming specific functions within the cultic, the ceremonial, and the administrative sphere of the state. Ḥumē was probably a member of an oppositional local clan associated with power who was more open towards Islam than the Duguwa. The main objective of the identification of the supposed clan ancestor Sef with the Yemenite hero Sayf b. Dhī Yazan, might have been the deliberately-attempted transposition of a divine into a legendary figure (see above p. 243). Altogether it would seem that the overthrow of the Duguwa was the consequence of religious incompatibilities between Islam and the cults of the Duguwa, rather than the result of economic changes such as a decreasing demand for slaves. Also, enslavement practices in an ancient and well-organized state should be seen more in terms of military activities against aliens and tributary levies, than in terms of internal recruitment (Meillassoux 1991: 51-52). Therefore it seems more appropriate to consider the process of Islamization in connection with the cult-mythological as opposed to an economic context.

To Article V (1979a: "Lieux de sépulture")

This study hopes to encourage research on oral traditions as a complement to available written evidence. This is still a very promising field, especially in those Islamized regions of West Africa where the basic institutions of pre-colonial states have survived. However, the research schedule should be more deliberately aimed at key questions of historical reconstruction. Major topics for the medieval history of the Chadic state concern the pre-Islamic state of the Duguwa, the shift from the Duguwa to the Sefuwa state, the Islamization of the institutions of divine kingship, and the agents of the territorial administration during the Sefuwa period (Kanuri clans and subgroups, Karde and other slaves). In fact, the available written sources provide only limited insights into these matters. It should also be recognized that the Arabic chronicles themselves present a one-sided picture of the past, in particular with respect to the pre-Islamic cultural and organizational

[13] Nachtigal, *Sahara*, II, 418-419. Certain traditions differentiate between Magumi Duguwa and Magumi Sefuwa (with respect to the inhabitants of Birni Gazargamo – Lange, 1993a: 274) and others between the Ngalma Duku and the Magumi Sefuwa (Palmer, *Memoirs*, II, 83; Nachtigal, *Sahara*, II, 419).

heritage of the Chadic state. The work undertaken by Frauke Jäger promises to reverse the current perspective by considering the *longue durée* in conjunction with North African cultural parallels.[14]

To Article VI (1982: "Éviction des Sēfuwa")

Dealing with the most dramatic territorial change in the history of the Chadic state, this study shows that the Sefuwa ruled over two separate states, Kanem and Bornu, from the middle of the thirteenth to the second half of the fourteenth century. Environmental degradation was probably the single most important factor explaining the on-going westward movement of people from Kanem to Bornu (1982: 329-330). However, the final withdrawal of the Sefuwa from Kanem towards 1380 was the consequence of a military confrontation between the Bulala and the Sefuwa precipitated by dynastic and clan conflicts. There is no doubt that the Bulala were the main oppositional force against the Sefuwa in Kanem. They belonged to the same population as the Sefuwa (1982: 328) and they were even descendants of the first ruling clan (1993b: 268-269) or rather clan-family, the Duguwa. The weakening of the Sefuwa as a consequence of the dynastic feuds between its two branches, the Idrīsids and the Dāwūdids, gave the Bulala the opportunity to assert their authority over the people of Kanem. The royal establishment of the Chadic state was torn apart by these conflicts to the extent that the first ruler to gain ascendancy after the withdrawal from Kanem was an outsider who belonged to neither of these branches (1977a: § 32).

With respect to the regional extension of the medieval Bornu state it should be noted that the area north of the Komadugu Yobe in the present Niger Republic, where Kanuri settlements extend up to 500 km west of Lake Chad, probably lay in the centre of the state. It is most likely to this region, easily accessible for the inhabitants of Kanem, that the Sefuwa and their loyal courtiers withdrew under the onslaught of the Bulala (1980: 174), and not to the Bornu province of Kagha southwest of Lake Chad (1989: 207-208).[15] Wūdi, close to Lake Chad, was apparently the major capital during this period.[16] The later southward shift of the Kanuri was mainly the consequence of further environmental degradation in the sub-Saharan region of northern Bornu.

[14] Jäger, "Ursprungstradition", 193-202; "Craftsmen", 169-184.

[15] The Kagha hypothesis was first expressed by Barth, *Travels*, II, 587. It is followed by Connah and Barkindo (*Three Thousand*, 225; "Early states", 245). Zeltner and Maikorema place Kagha on the Komadugu Yobe (Jäger, 64; *Contribution*, 35-36).

[16] Nachtigal, *Sahara*, I, 570; Landeroin, "Du Tchad", 354-355; Palmer, *Memoirs*, III, 28, 29.

Other fights between the Sefuwa and the Bulala took place in Kawar. East of Bilma, people identify a place called "mound of skulls" where a great number of Bulala are said to have been massacred by a Bornoan army which came in defense of the local Kanuri.[17] In fact, both states, Bornu and Kanem, obviously wanted to secure control over the central Saharan route for the benefit of direct trade with North Africa.

A note on chronology: On the basis of a new identification, the chronology of Kanem-Bornu rulers has to be slightly amended. The Bornu king Kandji b. Djemchach, mentioned in a letter to Tuat written the 10th Sha'bān 843 (16th January 1440), should not be identified with King Kaday b. 'Uthmān (39) of the Sefuwa but with King Ghadjī b. Imāta (44) of the Duguwa.[18] With this change of identification Ghadjī b. Imāta has to be antedated by ten years to 1439-1444. Therefore Sa'īd, the first king ruling only in Bornu, must have ruled six years earlier, from 1381-1382. From there on, the reigns of all kings have to be similarly dated backwards by six years (1993b: 52 n. 23). Consequently Ayūma, the first Duguwa king, reigned 983-1002, Humē, the founder of the Sefuwa line of rulers, reigned 1068-1080 and Dūnama Dibbalemi 1203-1242.

To Article VII (1988a: "Dignitaires bornoans")

This study shows that the two chronicles of Ibn Furtū use in certain instances general Arabic terms in reference to precise Kanuri titles. Two supplementary points can be made concerning the identification of the *wazir al-kabir* with the Digma. It appears from Ibn Furtū's description of military activities during the Kanem wars, that the Arjinoma was one of the closest officials of the *wazir al-kabir*. This information is confirmed by Rohlfs who defines the Arjinoma as the principal assistant of the Digma.[19] As the Arjinoma holds the same position with the *wazir* as with the Digma, the latter two can be considered identical. Furthermore, it should be noted that the Digma had a residence separate from that of the king (1988: 182). In nineteenth-century Bornu the Digma was a royal slave whose tasks were similar to that of a chief administrator. Among the present Bulala he is the first assistant of the Yerima (or Hirima/Irima?) and as such he sits among the right-hand officials of the kings, those of the left hand being members of the royal family.[20]

[17] Séré de Rivière dates the Bulala attack to the fifteenth century (*Histoire*, 195).

[18] Martin, *Oasis*, 123, and cf. Lange, 1977a: 89.

[19] Palmer, *Memoirs*, I, ff 59, 107; Rohlfs, *Reise*, I, 72. Nachtigal considers the Arjinoma to be a follower of the Kaigamma (*Sahara*, I, 719).

[20] Nachtigal, *Sahara*, I, 718; Hagenbucher, "Notes", 54.

These elements may be compared with the position of the Lowa in the court of Ife insofar as the latter belongs to the Oduduwa faction of the palace officials and thus deals with the clans of the Oduduwa or netherworld party (2004a: 135-143). Such an analogy seems to be a valid hypothesis, since the etymology of Digma/Dugma as *Dugu-ma* "chief of the Dugu" indicates a close relationship with the Duguwa. Historically, this definition of the Dugma as the leader of the main court faction gives further weight to the possibility that *malik* Sa'id, who headed the Sefuwa court after the withdrawal from Kanem, was the Dugma and hence the most important Duguwa official (1993a: 272; 1993b: 52n). Hence there are good reasons to suppose that the Dugma was in the same position relative to the clans of the Duguwa as the Lowa was relative to the clans of the Oduduwa party. However, one should remember that the Sefuwa represented the former clans of the upperworld deities who had pushed aside the Duguwa in the palace revolt of 1068 (see above p. 243). In view of this major political change it would appear that the parallel process of Islamization made a corresponding reshuffle of the palace organization superfluous – a reshuffle whereby the officials linked to the former clans of the netherworld would have been displaced from their pre-eminent positions. As we have seen above, the structural parallels between Chadic and Yoruba court institutions can be explained by a common cultural substratum characterized by an opposition between two clan-families tracing their descent either from the gods of the upper or of the netherworld.[21]

A further similarity between Chadic and Ife court organization is indicated by the parallel position of the king and an important female court official called Luwa in the town of Musune south of Lake Chad. The king, belonging to the Magumi clan, has an intimate relation on different levels with the Luwa, who must originate from the Ngalaga clan akin to the Ngalma Duku, whose members are related to the Magumi by a joking relationship. During the coronation ceremonies, the new king nominates the Luwa by choosing her from among the girls of the Ngalaga clan, as a mate for his one-week seclusion.[22] If the king represents the Sefuwa, and the Luwa the Duguwa, it would appear that these two officials of Musune are united by the same cult-mythological relationship as in Ife between Jaran and Lowa and perhaps that between the king and Obalufe, and in Bornu between the Mai (king) and Dugma.[23] Further culture-historical research, taking

[21] See above pp. 230-235 and charts 2, 3, 10, 12 (pp. 238, 265, 345).

[22] Falitha Platte refers to the Luwa as concubine and wife of the king (*Frauen*, 183, 186-192). The last Luwa was nominated in 1936. Therefore, other functions of the Luwa – as perhaps the sacred marriage during an earlier New Year festival – have not been recorded.

[23] The fact that the Luwa is called *Zamzam* in Ndutu (Platte, *Frauen*, 186) lends support to the supposition that the biblical figure of Hagar was originally patterned on a female official

into account all palace officials and deliberately adopting a comparative perspective, will certainly reveal more significant connections between historical developments and present structural relations.

To Article VIII (1989: "Préliminares – Sao")

This study delimits the areas inhabited by different groups of Sao and suggests that the name was originally applied to the city dwellers of the plains south of Lake Chad. It postulates that the pastoral people hailing from Kanem adopted numerous culture traits from this urban society in the late medieval period. Most important for the process of culture exchange would have been the time between 1250 and 1470 when the Sefuwa ruled first over Kanem and Bornu and later over Bornu alone. During the period of closest contact extending from 1380 to 1470 the southern city dwellers are supposed to have been involved in various ways in the dynastic conflicts between the Dāwūdids and the Idrisids, so that in the end the newcomers from Kanem borrowed numerous culture traits from the authochtones of the plains. Founding their new capital Birni Gazargamo towards 1470, the Sefuwa would have transferred the urban culture adopted from the Sao further to the north (1989: 203-210).[24]

In the light of later research the current paradigm involving a regional and period-specific approach to the late medieval history of Bornu and other West African kingdoms appears to be too restrictive. Instead of postulating – in this case – a process of intensive borrowing by the Nilo-Saharan Kanuri from the Chadic Sao during a limited and late period, it would be more appropriate to search for a common substratum of both cultures dating from the classical era. In fact, numerous parallels with the Canaanite culture of North Africa bear witness of an ancient process of exchange across the Sahara (see pp. 279-285). With respect of the trans-Saharan trade, the Nilo-Saharan people of Kanem-Bornu were in a better position than the Chadic speakers further south. Also, to refer to the immigrants from Kanem to Bornu as pastoralists, neglects the ancient process of state building involving mainly the peasant population east of Lake Chad. Moreover, the Kagha hypothesis is neither confirmed by the northern location of Jāja (1980: 174-75), nor by the ancient contact between Kanem and Mali, and also not by the long-lasting suzerainty of Kanem-Bornu over the Hausa states (1979b: 208 § 35; 1993b: 56-60).[25] Therefore it would be more appropriate to

comparable to the Luwa of Musune and the Iya (Bagwariya) of Daura. Her name and her Duguwa identity are reminiscent of the biblical Levites (cf. Lange, 2003: 25-26).

[24] See also Lange, 1990: 147-151, and Platte, *Frauen*, 239-242.

[25] Al-Ya'qūbi, Ibn Sa'īd, al-Maqrīzī *in*: Levtzion/Hopkins, *Corpus*, 21, 187-188, 355.

consider the ancient Kanuri population living west of Lake Chad in the present Niger Republic to have been the core group of the Bornu state. By disentangling the medieval history of Kanem-Bornu from that of the Sao, the common heritage of the Kanuri and the Sao-Kotoko, reaching back to classical times, will come into better focus.

To Article IX (1993a: "Ethnogenesis")

This study focuses on the role of the Duguwa or Zaghāwa and the Sefuwa in the history of Kanem-Bornu. Realizing that these two ruling groups can neither be defined as different dynasties nor as different people, it suggests that they were two clans closely associated in the exercise of power. Most important for the assessment of the role of the Duguwa in the Chadic state is the reappearance of the Zaghāwa/Zaghāy name in an external source from the first half of the fifteenth century (1979b: 207 § 32). In terms of internal developments, this strange reoccurrence of a quasi-ethnic label corresponds to the rise to power of the Bulala in Kanem and the temporary leading role assumed by Duguwa officials in Bornu (1993a: 272; 1993b: 52n). While in Kanem an exclusive Duguwa rule had been established by the Bulala, the situation in Bornu was characterized by conflicts within the Sefuwa dynasty and a royal court dominated by conciliatory non-royal Duguwa officials.[26] Furthermore, the existence of numerous non-royal Duguwa in Kanem and further east seems to have given rise to the present ethnic connotation of the term Zaghāwa (1977a: 153 n. 50). The distinction between royal and non-royal Duguwa can be based on the example of the Ife court where the Modewa – divided into three factions – are in a middle position between the non-royal clans of the Oduduwa section of the population and the Oduduwa-inclined king. In the Chadic state, the royal Kande slaves, who were in the nineteenth century under the command of the Digma, might have corresponded to the Modewa, while the Duguwa clans not associated with power can be compared to the Oduduwa section of the society.[27]

Going one step further, we may now accept that the first Muslim ruler of Kanem was a woman, as suggested by the *Girgam* (1977a: 67-68; 1993a: 265). Indeed, Hawwā' *bint* Arkū (1061-1065), belonging to the Duguwa royal estab-

[26] According to a more radical interpretation, taking the reference of al-Maqrīzī to the Zaghāy (Lange, 1979b: 207 § 32) as applying to the second half of the thirteenth century, and considering Kade (1242-1270) and Abd Allāh (1310-1328) to be Duguwa, it could even be argued that the *mawt* incident resulted in the return of the Duguwa to power.

[27] Nachtigal, *Sahara*, I, 647, 718. See also Smith, *Bauchi*, 28, 82-83. For the Modewa see Lange 2004a: 137-138, 145.

lishment, might have been vested with an important women's office such as the Magira in Bornu, and she might have been nominally Muslim.[28] In this respect we should note that the authors of the *Girgam* depict the mother of the second successor of Humē, no doubt on account of her position as Magira, as a powerful woman who, in accordance to Islamic law, emprisoned her own son for having too severely punished a thief (1977a: § 14). The nominal adherence of the second most important official of the Duguwa royal establishment to Islam could have been decisive for her temporary leading role in the state. A few years later the elimination of the royal Duguwa from power would in turn appear to have been the consequence of a general incompatibility between Islam and the continued reliance of the Duguwa on the basic practices and ceremonies of divine kingship. As former worshippers of netherworld deities and as staunch defenders of divine kingship they, like the Aznā of Hausaland, were less favourably disposed towards Islam than the worshippers of upperworld deities (see above pp. 246-248).

The single most important event giving rise to the emergence of the radical Duguwa faction of the Bulala in Kanem, was the destruction of the *munè* by Dūnama Dibalemi (c. 1203-1242). This event should not solely be conceived as a mortal blow against divine kingship, but also as an attempt to deprive the Duguwa of their remaining influence at the royal court. As long as the *munè* cult was practiced, even as a traditional ceremony, the Duguwa were assured of their continued participation in the state cult and of their association with royal administration. Its destruction heralded for them not only the end of their former world view, but also the decisive undermining of their social identity. Although the Duguwa rebellion prevented a restructuring of the palace organization, as we can see from the survival of the Duguwa in the Bornu court, it was the *munè* incident – and not the formal adoption of Islam by the court or the rise of the Sefuwa – which precipitated the most formidable crisis for the Chadic state. It not only led to the loss of Kanem but also to the temporary resurgence of the Duguwa in Bornu.

A last point to be clarified concerns the origin of the *munè* cult. Following the Sudanic state theory, the article supposes an Egyptian influence via Meroe and consequently adopts the name Amun. In fact, few culture traits in West African kingdoms point to Egyptian antecedents (1993b: 70-73; 2003: 3-6).[29] The existence of similar highly venerated cult objects have been noted for Kano and Songhay (2004d). The people of Kano used to sacrifice a great number of cattle to the *dirki* associated with the Koran. The neglect of the cult is supposed

[28] De Moraes Farias points out the high position of the "queen" (*malika*) in the contemporary Gao state (*Inscriptions*, §§ 415-421).

[29] Oliver/Fage, *Short History*, 31-38.

to have caused famine, and the destruction of the sacred object is considered to have brought about the conquest by the Fulani Jihadists at the beginning of the nineteenth century.[80] Until the end of the Askiya dynasty, the royal emblems of Songhay included an object called *din tūr* which was transmitted from one ruler to the next.[81] In line with other elements suggesting important Hebrew-Phoenician influences on early state building processes in the Sahelian belt, it is tempting to consider the three sacred objects in connection with the Israelite tradition. The term *din tūr* might derive from the North West Semitic *din* "law, tribunal" and the Hebrew *tōrā* "instruction, Pentateuch".[82] The term *dirki* is perhaps related to the Ugaritic and Hebrew *drk* "power, throne of power".[83] *Munè* could refer to the biblical *manna* insofar as part of this miraculous food was kept in the ark of the covenant and a jar of it was placed in the Sanctuary.[84] Each of the three terms may therefore have been a popular name for the holiest object of a state based on the principles of divine kingships. It was considered as a safeguard for abundance and a guarantee for justice and legal government.

Section Three: Hausa States

For years I was troubled by the question of Kanem-Bornu hegemony over the Hausa states. There were only oral traditions and no texts to support arguments for long-lasting influences of the Chadic state on kingdoms further west. Also the powerful Hausa communities of today and the minority position of the Kanuri in present-day Northern Nigeria, inhibited any straightforward answer to the question (1987b; 1987c; 1988c). In the end it was my ongoing preoccupation with the Bayajidda legend which slowly nurtured my conviction that, in spite of an age-old political dependency on Kanem-Bornu, the Hausa states upheld their own cultural traditions unaffected by any direct inputs from their powerful eastern neighbour (XI, XII).

My appointment at the University of Bayreuth in 1987 and my ensuing participation in the DFG-sponsored African research group gave me the opportunity to begin field research on Kebbi history. At first I attempted to interpret the oral data, especially the Kanta legend of origin, in the context of medieval state and trade history (VIII, 1991b). When I realized that regional changes supposed to have taken place in the late medieval period could not account for the main fea-

[80] *Kano Chronicle*, § 43, transl. Palmer, *Memoirs*, III, 127.

[81] Ibn al Mukhtār, *Ta'rīkh al-Fattāsh*, 153/tr. 274.

[82] HAL, I, 211; IV, 1575-1578.

[83] Ausloos, *Wörterbuch*, 79-80, 82-83; HAL, I, 223.

[84] Ex 16, 34; Deut 8, 3; Heb 9, 4; HAL, II, 564.

tures of the widespread Kanta legend, my attention was attracted to the narrative of Sargon of Akkad (XIV; 1995e). But comparisons of such a far-reaching nature seemed too speculative as long as they were based only on oral data. Therefore I turned my attention to the Hausa legend and focused on how it was embedded in cult-mythological and social structures. Exploring at the same time the North African and Canaanite horizon of West African history I finally came to the conclusion that the history of contacts with Phoenician North Africa is important for understanding a number of significant features of the Hausa and other Sudanic states (XII).

To Article X (1987d: "Evolution – Bayajidda")

As a first attempt at examining the age of one of the great oral traditions of West Africa, this study considers the reflexes of the Bayajidda legend in various written sources and reaches the conclusion that the core elements of the narrative are older than the available texts. Furthermore, it subscribes to the Bornu tax list theory, according to which a tributary relationship between Bornu and the Hausa states is evidenced in the legend.[35] Neglecting the distortions and simplifications of the Hausa tradition of origin in other Hausa towns, the study proposes the erroneous concept of an early nineteenth-century enlargement of the story that was done for the purpose of concealing the former political dependency of the Hausa states on Bornu. The single most important argument in favour of an ancient form of the legend, with Bayajidda as the primordial foundation hero and his two sons as the ancestors of two sets of states, is provided by the parallel Israelite narrative of Abraham and his two sons, Isaac/Jacob and Ishmael, defined as tribal ancestors of the Israelite and Arab tribes (1993b: 56; XII: 235-236). However, the real character of the Bayajidda legend as an ancient foundation charter can only be established by recognising the close connections which exist between the main components of the legend and the different cult-dramatic performances of the Gani festival. Involving the participation of key officials of the Daura state, the re-enactment of the legend during this pre-Islamic festival points to the legend's elaboration as early as the period of state formation (see above pp. 221-229 and 285-286).

To Article XI (1995a: "Pre-Islamic dimension")

Based on field research in Daura, this article shows that the Bayajidda legend is more than a purely oral narrative since its most significant features are related to

[35] Smith, "Beginnings", 347-352; Sutton, "Less orthodox history", 196-197.

ceremonial re-enactments during the pre-Islamic Gani festival. On account of the tight connection between incidents in the oral narrative and cult-dramatic actions performed during New Year festivals, I argue in this article that traditions of origin are less amenable to modifications than earlier thought (1998b; 1999b). By pointing out that the main figures of the Bayajidda legend survive as former deities within the Bori cult, the article suggests that prior to its legendary form the Hausa story was a myth (see also 1999b: 133-145). In fact, primordial mythology provides the best explanation for the on-going cult-dramatic performances by former priests and priestesses acting on behalf of their former deities. Methodologically, the attempt to relate mythical incidents to ritual performances comes close to the approach adopted by scholars of the well-known myth and ritual school in the field of ancient Near Eastern studies.

The shortcomings of the article consist mainly in haphazardous etymologies and in the reference to isolated culture traits. Furthermore, by restricting itself to the study of parallel phenomena in Hausa and in Canaanite-Israelite societies, it does not provide any historical explanation for the spread of Semitic influences to the societies south of the Sahara. A comprehensive study setting the comparative approach systematically into an historical perspective – without however taking full account of trans-Saharan trade in classical times and related state building processes – is now available with Walter Kühme's doctoral study on the kingdom of Gobir.[36]

Section Four: Yoruba States

The history of the Yoruba was not a major concern for historians who deal mainly with written texts. It came to my attention subsequent to my field research in Kebbi on the Kanta legends (1995c: XIII). It struck me that the figure of Sango, recognised by Frobenius to be of central relevance for Yoruba mythology, was clearly connected to the Semitic Baal (1994b: 227-235). The transfer of a priestly royal title to the name of a legendary thunder-god must have been the result of a popular understanding of cult-mythological performances. Ade Obayemi and Biodun Adediran drew my attention to a similar cult-mythological puzzle, the Itapa festival of Ife, which they interpreted as a re-enactment of historical events. Pursuing my readings in ancient Near Eastern mythology and continuing brief interviews with Ife priests, I came to realize that the Itapa festival provided in

[36] Kühme, *Königtum*. Frauke Jäger suggests that the spread of iron technology across the Sahara was linked to the trans-Saharan trade in the Phoenician period ("Craftsmen", 174-180). For the Phoenician factor in the state building process south of the Sahara see Lange 2003: 3-6, and above pp. 277-287.

many respects a perfect example of the cult-dramatic re-enactment of a festal myth similar to the Ugaritic Baal Cycle through the performances of a New Year festival (2003: 9-26; XV). For similar conclusions concerning the Igogo festival of Qwọ and the myth of Ishtar see Gabriele Weisser, *Königtum der Qwọ-Yoruba*.

To Article XIII ("Ifẹ – origin of the Yoruba")

This survey of previous theories concerning the origins of the Yoruba insists on the strong influence of ideology on African historiography: before independence, scholars thought that African societies were highly influenced by cultural inputs from the outside world, after independence this tendency was reversed by the insistence on internal factors of development. In spite of a number of valid cultural comparisons pointing out the existence of Mediterranean and Canaanite-Israelite culture traits among the Yoruba, authors of the colonial period supposed that these elements were transmitted from north to south by way of fanciful long-distance migrations for which there is no evidence in the historical records. Postcolonial scholarship on the other hand dismisses such unwarranted reconstructions, but instead of pursuing research in all directions it relies heavily on the results of archaeological excavations. For Ife and the history of the Yoruba, the late medieval datings of archaeological sites and finds led to the conclusion that the emergence of towns and the state building process itself belong to this period. This new orthodoxy disregards the fact that nearly all the available dates are based on the strictly circumscribed excavations of art objects. Certainly, more relevant and ancient dates would have been obtained if it had been possible to extend archeological research to sites like the Palace, the temple of Obatala and the grove of Oduduwa in the middle of the town of Ife.

A minor detail which needs to be corrected concerns the confusion between Yemoo, the partner of Obatala, and Yemoja, the great primordial goddess (1995b: 393-394). While the first can be equated with Anat, the partner of Baal, the second corresponds to Yamm and Tiamat, the great enemies of the weather-god (1999a: 107-116).

To Article XIV (1995b: "Links West Africa")

On the basis of field research in Kebbi and published studies on Oyo, this article proposes detailed comparisons between West African and Mesopotamian legends, myths and cult-mythologies. More precisely it considers the oral accounts of the legendary figures Kanta and Ṣango and compares them with the available written narratives of Sargon of Akkad and Baal. While with respect to

Kanta considerable parallels can be shown to exist between the two legends, the shift from the priest-king *šangû* to the mythological figure *Šàngó* presupposes a confusion between the divine and the human spheres. The solution to this enigma seems to be the New Year festival, when the king, acting then as *šangû* (priest-king), assumed the role of the weather-god Bel or Baal. For the people assisting in the cult-dramatic performances of the New Year festival, the king and the god must then have become one and the same being. In other words, in their minds the king changed into the god (Bel) and the god changed into the priest-king (*šangû*). This popular view of things reached West Africa not as abstract knowledge but as the result of personal experiences.

For Africanists used to considering African cultures in isolation, any consideration involving ancient Mesopotamia must appear far-fetched. Contrary to the Canaanite culture of the Phoenicians in North Africa there was apparently no geographical bridge between Mesopotamia and sub-Saharan Africa. However, it should be noted that the Phoenician mother towns on the Levantian coast paid tribute to Assyria from the middle of the ninth century BC, and that from the first half of the eighth century BC they were subject to direct Assyrian administration lasting until the end of the seventh century BC. During the latter period, the Phoenicians – as also the Israelites – were certainly subjected to considerable cultural influence exerted on them by their Assyrian overlords. A number of historians suppose that the Israelites participated in the Phoenician colonization of North Africa.[1] Similarly, Assyrians or Assyrian-influenced Canaanites may have established themselves in the North African trading towns of the Phoenicians. Some of these emigrants and refugees might easily have joined the Phoenician traders on their way across the Sahara.

Section Five: States of the Middle Niger

My interest in this field benefited first from the lessons of Raymond Mauny at the Sorbonne, then from numerous discussions with John Hunwick during our common residence in Cairo from 1977 to 1980. But it was not until teaching at the University of Niamey from 1980 to 1985 that the history of the Middle Niger became a major preoccupation for me. Jean Rouch who declared the *Ta'rikhs* to be useless for historians, Boubé Gado who made the oral traditions of the Zarma a major issue, Robert Nicolaï who questioned the linguistic identity of Songhay, Jean-Pierre Oliver de Sardan who uncovered numerous links between Songhay

[1] For the connections between the Phoenician and the Assyrian expansions see Bunnens *in* UCPP, 46, and for the participation of Israelites in the Phoenician colonization of North Africa Oliver/Fage, *Short History*, 42.

history and anthropology, and others who cared to share their views on Songhay with me, brought the history of the region where I was living and teaching to the centre of my intellectual focus.

To Article XVI (1991a: "Rois de Gao-Sané")

This study is based on the discovery that the early twelfth century rulers of Gao-Saney are identical with the first Muslim kings of the Zā dynasty known from the Timbuktu chronicles (1988b: 8). It correctly stipulates that the rulers of Gao-Saney were newcomers who imposed their authority on the earlier Qanda kings of Gao. It is also right to suppose that the rulers of Gao-Saney, in spite of their Caliphal loan names, were not the first Muslim kings of Gao. It is further well-founded that Kukiya was not the first capital of the Zā and that Gao was not a Songhay state from the beginning.

The major shortcomings of this article concern the identification of the Gao-Saney rulers as Berbers and the notion of a pre-dynastic Mande ethnicity on the eastern Niger bend. Further, I now disclaim the idea that the use of the "Caliphal metaphor" indicates the existence of a non-dynastic mode of succession, and that the prominent position of certain queens is the result of a concerted marriage policy aimed at the integration of a foreign dynasty into the local establishment (1991a: 262, 263; XX: 514). De Moraes Farias supports the first idea by hypothesising that the "Caliphal metaphor" expresses a pact between powerful groups in the area leading to a rotational system of succession. With respect to the second he cogently argues that the queens were part of a system in which "official queens" performed important constitutional roles.[38] From the perspective of divine kingship these offices once had priestly functions in connection with the great *magna mater* goddess (1999b: 129-149). They were only abolished at a relatively late stage in the process of Islamization (1990: 145-147).

To Article XVII (1994a: "From Mande to Songhay")

Answering to criticism voiced by Hunwick who supports an orthodox view of Songhay history, this essay tries to bring into better focus the connections between the dynastic and the ethnic history of the Middle Niger. It continues to argue against the common idea of tribal stability and insists on the importance of traditions of origin for the understanding of ethnogenesis (specifically of the Zarma). With respect to the Mande substratum of the Middle Niger, it draws

[38] De Moraes Farias, *Inscriptions*, §§ 403, 421.

attention to the geographical closeness of the first centre of ancient Ghana, in the Lakes region of the Niger, to Gao and the eastern Niger bend. It further tries to define Songhay ethnicity on the basis of the royal Dongo/Sango cult (see also 1994b: 217-222).

The article is flawed by several misconceptions. The Zā are still linked to a supposed pre-Zāghé Mande substratum on the eastern Middle Niger, and the Songhay are seen as late eastern immigrants from Kebbi. On the level of dynastic history, the Zāghé are still identified as Berbers and the Sonni are considered to be their descendants. A related misinterpretation concerns the long-lasting duality of a Zā and a Sonni royal clan. The Zā are supposed to have called in Mali protection against an alliance between the Sonni and the Sorko and the Songhay. This leads to the question of the circumstances under which the submitted Zā could possibly have been able to call in the Keita and thus throw off the Zāghé/Sonni leadership. There is little support in the available documentary and oral data for such multi-facetted and momentous medieval history for the eastern Middle Niger. The disconnection between the Zāghé and the Zā is in particular undermined by the appearance of the Zā/Zuwā title on the Gao-Saney inscriptions.[39]

To Article XVIII (1996a: "Chute des Sissé")

The study proposes a re-evaluation of Songhay history on the basis of a greater geographical proximity between ancient Ghana and the Gao state. For various reasons the Zāghé are now seen to be Soninke and not Berber by origin. The article tries to show that the Zāghé are identical with the Zā of the *Ta'rikhs* and that they correspond to Sisse refugee kings from Ghana. It considers the Zā to be a homogenous ruling house which first ruled in Ghana, then experienced a palace revolt with a Muslim branch coming to power, and finally were expelled from Ghana by non-Sisse Muslims. This reconstruction makes it possible to conceive the Zāghé as refugee Zā from Ghana who established themselves under the umbrella of local Massūfa on the site of Gao-Saney. It further makes it possible to identify the ancestors of the Zarma from Tendirma as Sisse having originated from Ghana. The idea of a timeless Mande substratum on the eastern Niger bend is now replaced by the conception of a dynastic link between the Sisse from Ghana and the Zāghé from Gao by way of the Zā.

Misconceptions concern the matrimonial policy of the Zāghé with respect to the local vassal dynasty of the Qanda and the eastern origin of the Songhay (1996a: 157, 164). Having been former suzerains of the Qanda, the Zā did not need to practice a matrimonial policy with respect to the local kings. The epi-

[39] De Moraes Farias, *Inscriptions*, §§ 20, 29.

graphic evidence rather suggests that the *malika* ("queen") of Gao-Saney was not the wife but the legal counterpart of the king, or rather a former high priestess reduced to the status of constitutional supervisor.[40] As such her office resembled that of the Magira of Bornu and the Magajiya of the Hausa states (see below XIX).

To Article XIX (1996b: "Almoravid expansion")

Written in conjunction with the previous study, this essay reverses the perpective by dealing mainly with Ghanean and incidentally with Gao history. It builds on an earlier attempt to throw light on the geographically and historically overlapping histories of Ghana and ancient Mali (1992b). On the basis of written, oral and archaeological evidence it argues that the centre of the Ghana kingdom was not in Kumbi Saleh but at Tendirma in the Lakes region of the Niger. The essay further suggests that Islam was not implanted in the Ghana state as a consequence of a Lamtūna conquest but as a result of a palace revolt in 1076 facilitated by Almoravid pressure. Hence, the fall of the pre-Islamic Sisse rulers is thought to have been brought about by a *coup d'état* staged by the Muslim party of the Sisse under Kema-Magha. It supposes that in 1087, following the death of the Almoravid leader Abū Bakr b. 'Umar, Kema-Magha was in turn overthrown and that he withdrew with his royal household to the provincial town of Gao.

A major correction of this article concerns the role of the Lamtūna in the fall of Kema-Magha. There are some difficult assumptions involved in the postulated Lamtūna conquest of Ghana in 1087 (1996b: 338-342). If the Almoravids conquered Ghana after the death of 'Abū Bakr b. 'Umar – and supposedly established themselves there as a ruling elite – where then did the 'Alid kings of Ghana come from who were paying allegiance to the 'Abbasids at the beginning of the twelfth century?[41] Why does an external source associate the date 1076 with an Almoravid conquest and not the date corresponding to the death of Abū Bakr b. 'Umar, 1087?[42] How is it conceivable that Kema-Magha got support from other Almoravids in Gao after his supposed explusion from Ghana by the Lamtūna? Therefore it seems preferable to interpret the oral indications of a Berber presence in Ghana restrictively in terms of some king with temporary influence in Ghana and not in terms of the establishment of a Berber dynasty. It is more likely that Muslim mulattoes from inside Ghana, and Almoravid preachers from outside, conjointly criticised the surviving institutions of divine kingship. Under unknown political circumstances the Sisse were expelled from the capital of Ghana and sought refuge in their eastern province of Gao towards 1087.

Evidence for the survival of a key institution of divine kingship among the Zāghē of Gao-Saney can be found in the stelae of the queens. De Moraes Farias is probably right to interpret the presence of a number of queens in the Zuwā polity in reference to official queen-mothers in other Sudanic kingdoms.[43] The correspondences noted between the stelae of two kings and two queens could indeed indicate a special relationship between two officials, though not of a matrimonial but of a ceremonial nature (cf. 1991a: 260-261). In the mid-fourteenth century the "offical queen" of Mali was vested with considerable power.[44] A good example of a queen-mother's office resisting Islamizing tendencies for several centuries before finally succumbing to Islamic reforms, is provided by the office of the Magira in Bornu (1990: 151-153). Within the Hausa states the *Sarauniya* ("queen"), usually called Magajiya, was formerly a high priestess and as such she played an important role in the Gani festival.[45] After their conquest of the Hausa states, the Fulani Jihadists abolished this former priestly office because of its pre-Islamic religious nature.[46] These parallels throw light on the *malika* institution of Gao. Just as the formerly divine Zāghē kings prided themselves of their pre-Islamic Zāghay ancestry, they were eager to up-hold the rich institutional and festival tradition of Ghana, their country of origin. Therefore the *raison d'être* of the *malika* stelae of Gao-Saney should be seen as an attempt to Islamize as much as possible an earlier key institution of divine kingship through Arabic epitaphs and related Islamic funeral rituals.

40 De Moraes Farias, *Inscriptions*, § 421.
41 Al-Idrīsī *in*: Levtzion/Hopkins, *Corpus*, 109.
42 Al-Zuhrī *in*: Levtzion/Hopkins, *Corpus*, 98.

43 De Moraes Farias, *Inscriptions*, n° 14, 30, § 421.
44 Ibn Battūta *in*: Levtzion/Hopkins, *Corpus*, 294-295.
45 Smith, *Zaria*, 130, 138, 340; Hassan/Shuaibu, *Chronicle*, 68, 76; see above pp. 224-225).
46 Smith, *Zaria*, 141; Lange 1994d: 46 f.

Bibliography

Abbreviations:

DCPP: E. Lipinski (ed.), *Dictionnaire de la civilisation phénicienne et punique*, Brepols 1992.
FN 76: Field notes D. Lange from 1976.
HAL: L. Koehler et al., *Hebräisches und aramäisches Lexikon*, 5 vols., Leiden 1967-1996.

Books and articles:

Aistleitner, J., *Wörterbuch der ugaritischen Sprache*, Berlin 1963.
Barkindo, B., "Early states of the Central Sudan", *in:* J. Ajayi and M. Crowder (eds.), *History of West Africa*, vol. I, 3rd ed. Harlow 1985, 225-254.
Barth, H., *Travels and Discoveries in North and Central Africa*, 3 vols., New York 1857-1859.
Cahen, Cl., *Orient et Occident au temps des Croisades*, Paris 1983.
Chapelle, J., *Nomades noirs du Sahara*, Paris 1957.
Connah, G., *Three Thousand Years in Africa. Man and His Environment in the Lake Chad Region of Nigeria*, Cambridge 1981.
Cuoq, J., *Histoire de l'islamisation de l'Afrique de l'Ouest*, Paris 1984.
Franconie, M., *Karl Moritz von Beurmann: voyages et explorations, 1860-1863*, Gibanel 1973.
George U. and H. Ziegert, "Die vergessene Zitadelle der Christen - Djado", *Geo* 9 (1992), 157-182.
Hagenbucher, F., "Notes sur les Bilala du Fitri", *Cahiers de l'ORSTOM* 5 (1968), 40-69.
Hassan, M. and A. Shuaibu, *A Chronicle of Abuja*, Lagos 1962.
Hiskett, M., *The Course of Islam in Africa*, Edinburgh 1994.
Ibn al-Mukhtār/Maḥmūd Ka'tī, *Ta'rīkh al-Fattāsh*, ed. and transl. by O. Houdas and M. Delafosse, Paris 1913.
Jäger, F., "Die Ursprungstradition von Kanem-Bornu in einer Perspektive der langen Dauer", *in:* H. Egbert *et al.* (eds.), *Afrika im Wandel*, Berlin 2001, 193-202.
- "Craftsmen and mythology: historical and religious perspectives", *in:* U. Bauer *et al.* (eds.), *Interkulturelle Beziehungen in Afrika*, Frankfurt/M 2001, 169-184.
Kühme, W., *Das Königtum von Gobir: Götter, Priester, Feste einer sakralen Gesellschaft*, Hamburg 2003.
Landeroin, M.-A., "Du Tchad au Niger", *in:* J. Tilho, *Documents scientifiques de la mission Tilho (1906-1909)*, vol. II, Paris 1911, 309-539.
Lange, D.: see above pp. 9-12.

Levtzion, N. and J. Hopkins, *Corpus of Early Arabic Sources for West African History*, Cambridge 1981.
Maïkorema, Z., *Contribution à l'histoire des populations du sud-est nigérien: le cas du Mangari (XVIe-XIXe s.)*, Niamey 1985.
Martin, A., *Les oasis sahariennes*, vol. I, Algiers 1908.
Martin, B. G., "Mai Idrīs of Bornu and the Ottoman Turks, 1576-78", *Journal of Middle East Studies* 3 (1972), 470-490.
Moraes Farias, P. F. de, *Arabic Medieval Inscriptions from the Republic of Mali: Epigraphy, Chronicles, and Songhay-Tuāreg History*, Oxford 2003.
Nachtigal, G., *Sahara und Sudan*, 3 vols., Berlin 1879-1889.
Oliver, R. and J. D. Fage, *A Short History of Africa*, 6th ed., London 1988.
Palmer, H. R., *Sudanese Memoirs*, 3 vols., Lagos 1928
Platte, E., *Frauen in Amt und Würden. Handlungsspielräume muslimischer Frauen im ländlichen Nordostnigeria*, Frankfurt/M. 2000.
Rohlfs, G., *Reise durch Nordafrika*, 2 vols., Gotha 1868, 1873.
- *Quer durch Afrika*, Leipzig 1874 (reed., Stuttgart 1984; transl. J. Debetz, *G. Rohlfs: Voyages et explorations*, vol. II, Paris 2001).
Ruprechtsberger, E. M., *Die Garamanten*, Mainz 1997.
Séré de Rivières, E., *Histoire du Niger*, Paris 1965.
Smith, M. G., *Government in Zazzau*, London 1960.
- "The beginnings of Hausa society, A. D. 1000-1500", *in:* J. Vansina *et al.* (eds.), *The Historian in Tropical Africa*, London 1964, 339-357.
- *The Affairs of Daura: History and Change in a Hausa State, 1800-1958*, Berkeley 1978.
Sutton, J., "Towards a less orthodox history of Hausaland", *Journal of African History* 20 (1979), 179-201.
Vikør, K. S., *Oasis of Salt: the History of Kawar, a Saharan Centre of Salt Production*, London 1999.
Weis, H., "Die Bornustrasse – der Weg ins Herz Afrikas", *in:* H. Schiffers (ed.), *Heinrich Barth: Ein Forscher in Afrika*, Wiesbaden 196?, 421-490.
Weisser, G., *Das Königtum der Oyo-Yoruba: Zwischen Geschichte und Mythologie*, PhD, Bayreuth 2004 (unpubl.).
Zeltner, J. Cl., *Pages d'histoire du Kanem*, Paris 1980

INDEX

This index merely covers the newly composed chapters of this book, i.e. pp. 1-8, 215-306, 343-376, 495-567.